

## Claims

1. A pre-payment energy supply system including a pre-payment utility meter, and a digital cellular transceiver provided at a location, the utility meter having an associated location identifier unique to the location embedded within it and a memory for storing prepayment credits, the utility meter being arranged to communicate with a remote communication unit via the transceiver, the remote communication unit having a database of the unique identifiers and transceiver numbers, wherein a payment for crediting to a meter is directed as a signal to the remote communication unit and includes the unique identifier, the remote communication unit being arranged to determine the transceiver number from the unique identifier, to communicate with the utility meter via the transceiver and to add appropriate pre-payment credits to the memory.
2. A pre-payment energy supply system according to claim 1, further comprising an identification card associated with the utility meter and carrying the unique identifier for identifying the meter during crediting transactions.
3. A pre-payment energy supply system according to any preceding claim, in which the transceiver and the utility meter communicate with each other via RF signals.
4. A pre-payment energy supply system according to any preceding claim, further comprising a user interface unit arranged to communicate with the utility meter communicate via RF signals.
5. A pre-payment energy supply system according to claim 4, in which the user interface unit includes a card reader device, wherein the card reader device is arranged to read data from a card to be charged for the transaction, the user interface unit being responsive to process the data from the card to form at least a part of a transaction authorisation.
6. A pre-payment energy supply system according to claim 5 when dependent on claim 2, in which the card reader device is arranged to read data from an identification card, the data from the identification card forming part of the signal to the remote communication unit.
7. A pre-payment energy supply system according to claim 4, 5 or 6, in which the user interface unit includes a keyboard, wherein the user interface unit is arranged to accept a code entered via the keyboard to form at least a part of a transaction authorisation.

8. A pre-payment energy supply system according to any of claims 4 to 7, in which the utility meter includes a memory for storing a user's banking data, wherein the user interface unit is arranged to accept an input from the user authorising use of at least part of the banking data to form at least a part of a transaction authorisation.

9. A pre-payment energy supply system according to any of claims 4 to 8, in which the user interface unit includes a display, wherein the user interface unit is arranged to display on request utility usage data from the utility meter.

10. A pre-payment energy supply system according to any of claims 4 to 9, in which the user interface device is remote from the utility meter.

11. A pre-payment energy supply method in a pre-payment energy supply system comprising a remote communication unit, and a pre-payment utility meter and a digital cellular transceiver provided at a location, the utility meter having an location identifier unique to the location embedded within it and a memory for storing pre payment credits, the method comprising the steps of:

accepting at the remote communication unit a payment for pre-payment credits including ~~a~~ the unique identifier for the utility meter to be credited; and,

communicating pre-payment credits to the utility meter via the transceiver using the unique identifier.