

Firms lose trade as power cuts strike

Report by Ryan Fletcher

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MYSTERY power cuts in part of Canterbury have cost thousands in lost trade, according to angry business owners.

Sam Deeson of Deeson's Restaurant in Sun Street is furious at a spate of 10 power cuts over the past two weeks.

He has lost a number of lunchtime and evening sessions and had to throw away food when the freezer shut down.

Mr Deeson has warned the power cuts could ultimately cost him the business.

Sam, who has a staff of 21, said: "I am at my wit's end. I am already £6,000 down in lost business and stock.

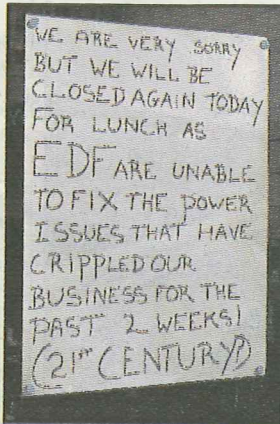
"If I lose another night it could cripple me. I could lose the whole business.

"EDF is quite happy to take £3,000 a quarter from me but doesn't seem in a hurry to solve the problem. Customer service is diabolical."

The power cuts started on February 16 and have continued intermittently since then.

Manager at Strada restaurant Aaron Sawyer said he too lost business.

"It almost killed a whole Saturday night's business, which



Angry: Sam Deeson's note to his customers

is our busiest day. We shut between 6 and 8pm and were down about £2,000 on our usual takings."

Cheryl Parker, manager of the Kennedy's shoe shop in Sun Street was also hit.

She told the Times: "It's frustrating. We've lost business because people don't realise we're open."

EDF spokesman James Barber said engineers were working on the problem.

He said: "The problems appear to have been caused by



Big bill: Sam Deeson receives his energy bill

an intermittent fault which has been difficult to pinpoint."

But he said there would be no compensation for businesses, although they could claim £100 if power was out for more than 18 hours. Residential customers can claim £50.

He added: "Such payments

are not compensation and do not take into account individual inconvenience or losses.

"Should another failure occur, we will be able to pinpoint the fault more accurately. Our engineers are working in the area locating the fault and subsequently making permanent repairs."

In brief

Road closed as cyclist falls off bike

ONE of the city's busiest roads was closed for two hours on Saturday after a motorcyclist came off his bike.

The accident happened near Cow Lane, Wincheap, at 12.20pm and traffic was diverted while crews treated the 49-year-old rider, from Dover.

He was not seriously hurt but was taken to the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford.

The road was reopened at 2.20pm.

Rape charge for man 20 years after attack

A MAN has been remanded in custody after being charged with a rape in Canterbury more than 20 years ago.

James Robertson, 57, is due to attend Canterbury Crown Court later this month after he was arrested near Preston, Lancashire.

Police said he was charged with four offences dating back to August 1988.

Campaigners reply to council's plans

CAMPAIGNERS have submitted their formal response to the council's plans for the future of the city. The Hilltop, Iffin, Merton and New House Lanes Action Group criticised officials for concentrating on a fourth slip road onto the A2 at South Canterbury and said there was no evidence it was needed.

Chairman Professor Clive Church said more research was also needed before land south of the city was allocated for thousands of new homes, and said Hersden should be reconsidered as a better site to protect valuable farmland elsewhere.

