

Hertz's Disastrous Service in Scotland - A Plea for Improvement

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1. Introduction

During our recent trip to Scotland, our experience with Hertz car rental was nothing short of a disaster. We encountered multiple issues, from misleading information to non-existent customer service. These issues not only reflect poorly on Hertz but also shed light on the challenges faced by tourists due to the inadequate charging infrastructure in Scotland. Here's a breakdown of our ordeal:

2. Car Rental Issues

2.1. Reservation Nightmare

We had a prepaid reservation, but upon arrival at the EDI airport, we were forced to wait for 1 1/2 hours at Hertz. We had booked a fuel automatic "Kompaktklasse" (Kia Ceed or similar) but got an EV. A "brand-new" polestar 2. We had no choice but to accept a different car because they claimed no other vehicles were available. This was a downgrade, not an upgrade.

2.2. Additional driver for free (as offered in booking)

Charged for and said we have to claim it back from the broker as it is not an Hertz offering.

2.3. False Range Claim

Hertz employees promised a minimum range of 380 miles for our vehicle, a Polestar 2. In reality, we could only manage a maximum of 240 miles on a full charge, and that's not recommended by Polestar.

2.4. Misleading Car Age

Hertz claimed our car was "brand new", but it turned out to be six months old with 9,339 miles on the odometer.

2.5. Undisclosed Damages

Despite scratches on the rims, Hertz assured us it was not an issue. We then ignored, a big mistake, the scratches on the rims as previous experience from Ireland showed us that this is not an issue (even with Hertz bookings) → Hertz now sent an invoice for new rims. Should have taken a video but had to pick up our children. A costly mistake.

2.6. EV Charging Nightmares

False claim by Hertz employee: "Not a problem in Scotland, even in the highlands. Just use the shell fob or scan the QR code. Car will be full within 15-30 minutes."



We found no part of the above statement to be true.

We asked the employee 3 times if it is wise to take an electric car into the highlands and were blatantly lied to with assurances that it's "not a problem".

Hertz did not provide a chargescotland card that maybe would have helped at least a tiny bit. We did ask!

We faced numerous issues with charging infrastructure, including broken chargers, slow charging speeds, and a lack of compatible cards/apps. We even spent money (38GBP) on a ferry to reach a charging point that was also broken and found not one charger above 50kw but many below. Many even below 10kWh. SLOW chargers! (plan an overnight stay at the charger or hitch a ride with your entire family). There is no shell station far and wide to use the given fob. It is impossible to tell from the map if a charger supports web pay even if it was recently used. Web pay not working on most chargers we found.

Lots of calls with mobile phone to get to an operator to clarify situation at charging stations or to make them available through restart etc.

Driving around from one broken/non-useable charger to the next instead of enjoying Scotland, the highlands and visiting attractions. Because you need the battery to be filled up to get anywhere!

We missed most of our planned attractions to visit. Charging car on household over night for max +35 % battery charging to get 84 miles (35% of 240 miles = 84 miles; instead of 35% of told 380 miles = 126 miles).

2.7. Customer Service Failure

Hertz provided a contact number that led to an automated loop with no actual assistance. Calls were never returned, and web chat only directed us to "call roadside assistance." This left us stranded without support. The number is an automated loop that leads either back on itself or to a hang up unless reservation is selected and they promised multiple times to have us called back. We never got a single return call. Incompetency in giving information about opening hours for returning the car at Holyhead Port on Monday (28th Aug) - Both station and compound closed.

Post Script: Filled out a post rental Hertz survey and was promised a call back and have yet to receive one.

2.8. Return Challenges

We were charged 166.67 GBP for returning the car to Holyhead instead of the initially threatened 800 GBP. "You WILL retun the card here or you will be charged 800 Pounds". "You can take a train to Holyhead as that will be cheaper than the 800 Pounds". However, we had to drive to Holyhead because Hertz didn't offer alternatives or return calls.

We spent nearly an hour to get everything arranged to get rid of that car to reach our ferry. At least two other poeple tried to return cars during that time and stood confronted with similar issues. Station and compound closed. No answer on the number given.

All 4 Hertz parking spaces full so had to call harbour master to add license plate to white list to avoid towing and in addition most chargers at the port nonfunctional and the only working one had to be remotely restarted and had additional parking fees for over 20 minutes.

2.9. Billing threats

We have been checking the mailbox since the rental for responses to our questions to Hertz and now have discovered a new low. Hertz has sent us a bill for charging (a guess) with just a summary price and no details of units charged or unit cost and have set the subject to "reminder for overdue charges". A reminder implies previous communications although there was none. Working in security one is often reminded to be wary of threatening mails sent out of context, setting a short deadline on nebulous costs with links in them. This is one. I can guess that it's from when I used the Shell fob at the Lancaster filling station but there is no way to tell as there are no details and just threats that if I don't pay within the next two days it will be sent to debt collectors. The price also seems steep if it was for that. It seems you should also beware of Hertz's "we charge fair prices for charging" claims. The Hertz definition of fair seems to differ to mine but even so I'd pay if they can at least say what it is I'm paying for. It looks like I should have avoided the Shell fob at all costs as it just causes more trouble on top of sitting for a long time (22% longer) at a filling station on a slower than advertised charger.

3. Chargers

1. Fort William
 - a. Arrived on first day and parked at unoccupied charger of 3. Made multiple attempts with car connected first or last etc. before ringing charge place Scotland to be told it doesn't work with web pay and to try one of the others. Both 50kw chargers taken so hooked up to AC and then later moved to one of the 50kw as it was freed up. As AC was slow, the ferry was out, and we had to make the accommodation before night we stopped charging on DC when we had enough to get us to the next charger the next day. Still hours wasted in a parking space between two supermarkets. Only saving grace was that we could buy food for a picnic as there was no longer any way to eat out as planned. Arrived very late at our accommodation.
2. Port Kilchoan
 - a. Charger nonfunctional, no web pay, just errors. Told by a chargescotland employee to go to Tobermory. 38 GBP, return, for the ferry.
3. Tobermory.
 - a. Charger broken, no web pay. No time on the Isle of Mull as next charger is slow. Family stress.
4. Ardnamurchan Lighthouse
 - a. Cafe closed as we arrived. Slow charger, promised 20KW, gave 7.4. 1 1/4 hours to recharge enough to get back, 3% battery left on return to accommodation after a day of searching for working chargers.
5. Oban
 - a. Chargers near the distillery, no web payment. Charger at the port gave grief but a fellow EV

driver lent a hand, stating owning an electric car in Scotland was madness. He let us in on his card, saying tourists shouldn't endure an EV here. Charged AC first then later DC when that finally turned green.

6. Dunoon

- a. A charger at the pier blocked by rides. The supermarket charger, inert (Genie Point).

7. Lancaster

- a. The first Shell station with an EV charger on the route. 39 kWh instead of 50. Brand new, but not working properly so dialed down.

8. Colwyn Bay

- a. Charger at the pier, "bppulse." App-only activation via app in the UK store only. A helpful bppulse employee activated it, no charge. Charged over night, returned early to queue of 2 waiting cars.

9. Holyhead

- a. At Holyhead, we heard it plain and simple from a harbor worker: "You're lucky, all the rest don't work." A 5 GBP parking fee for 20 minutes in a designated charging spot. The system needed a remote reboot before working. Over 20 minutes on the phone with the operator just to get it started. It was easier to pay the parking online.

10. Diverse Broken Chargers

- a. Broken chargers everywhere. Lights, no lights, car refuses, activation won't work. Endless experiments, lost time and wasted charge.

3.1. Summary

Holyhead

Multiple non-functional chargers, expensive parking fees, and system reboots required.

Dunoon

Pier charger blocked, supermarket charger inoperative.

Colwyn Bay

Charger required an app that was only available in the UK store.

Oban

Chargers near distillery did not support web pay, causing significant inconvenience.

Tobermory

Broken charger, ferry expenses, and time constraints.

Port Kilchoan

Nonfunctional charger with no web pay.

Ardnamurchan Lighthouse

Slow charger with lower capacity than advertised.

Lancaster

Shell filling station with a slower than advertised charger.

Fort William

2 working chargers and one without web pay. Choose wisely.

Others

A mix of the above with added troubles like App not available for tourists and a gaggle of Apps to boot.

4. Conclusion

Our vacation in Scotland turned into a series of problems and disappointments, largely due to Hertz's inadequate service and misleading information. However, it's crucial to acknowledge that the poor charging infrastructure in Scotland exacerbated our troubles. We call on both Hertz and the Scottish Tourism Board to address these issues. We strongly advise against using Hertz in Scotland and hope our ordeal serves as a cautionary tale for others planning their trips. Additionally, we implore the Scottish Tourism Board to invest in and improve the charging infrastructure to enhance the experience of electric vehicle tourists visiting this beautiful country. Scotland has immense potential as a tourist destination, but without adequate support for electric vehicles, it is driving away environmentally-conscious travelers. We Had guessed that it was safer to take a fuel car and were forced into driving EV. Our guess was far removed to what we met with.

5. Images from the trenches



Figure 1. What you need to get to web pay

The biro line around it signifies "this is the only thing you will need...". I think what the Hertz employee meant was you will be seeing this a lot.

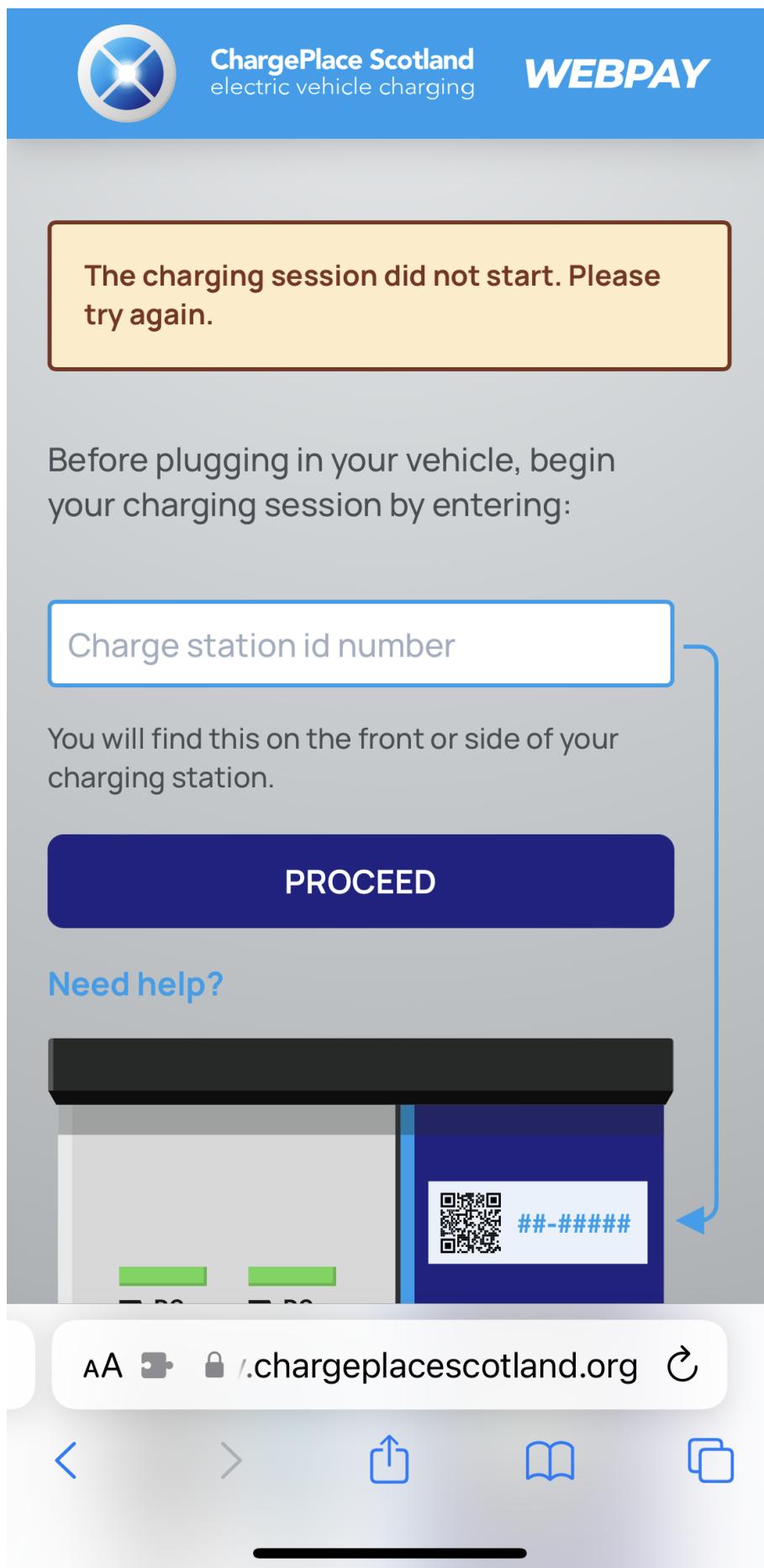


Figure 2. What you see when web pay doesn't work



Figure 3. Whoohoo a working charger... it must work someone is plugged in. Right? Wrong.



ChargePlace Scotland
electric vehicle charging

WEBPAY

The charging session did not start. Please try again.

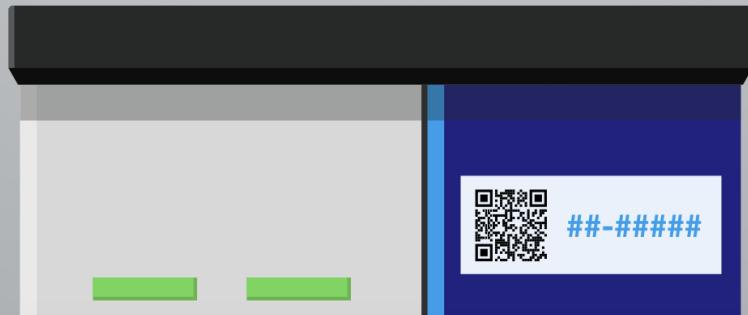
Before plugging in your vehicle, begin your charging session by entering:

Charge station id number

You will find this on the front or side of your charging station.

PROCEED

Need help?



AA 🔋 🔒 chargeplacescotland.org ⏪



Figure 4. And you see it a lot...

If you see that don't try again and just ring the service desk and explain to them that you need a working charger with working web pay. They are friendly but they can't do much else for you than to point you towards a working charger. I've found them very understanding. Nearly as if they have this a lot.



Figure 5. Have seen this a lot too...

Just to add. When you see the above you will not be standing under a filling station roof. You will be standing in the cold, rain, sun, wind, dark, or whatever condition Scotland can provide and you may well be standing there for a long time fiddling with credit cards, phones, and charging cables. And don't forget to read the warnings about charging cables and heavy rain. Or phones and heavy rain. It's the reason I put the QR code in the pay and display clip to keep it dry. You may have company and if you do they will probably not have compliments to hand out about EV charging technology or EV cars in Scotland. Say something nice about Scotland, maybe mention the Edinburgh Tattoo or say that the highland games you visited (somewhat later than planned) were really nice. There's no point wallowing in pain. And the one other thing you might not like when you open that lid is to see that the charging infrastructure has a cousin called signal strength. whatever you do don't have an empty phone. You might want a zip lock for the phone if it's not watertight.



Do NOT run out of mobile data when in the highlands (signal strength aside). You WILL use a lot of mobile data and you WILL make many calls.

< Recents

**+44 20 3545 0900**

London, England, United Kingdom



message



call



video



mail

Today

09:20 Outgoing Call

14 minutes (Zero KB)

09:19 Outgoing Call

38 seconds (Zero KB)

Share Contact

Create New Contact

Add to Existing Contact



Favorites



Recents



Contacts



Keypad



Voicemail

Figure 6. Ringing Hertz and going around in loops



Figure 7. Ringing Hertz again (and again and...)



Figure 8. Let's go to Tobermory to get to a working charger



Figure 9. Dead

This one was an example of looking for a charger and finding it blocked so go to the next one on the map. It's not the one at Tobermory which I took no pictures of out of shear disgust at standing 20m next to a distillery I wanted to go to but couldn't as it would trap me on Mull or leave me stuck in

the highlands had I not taken the next ferry back.



Figure 10. 380 Mile range... or not

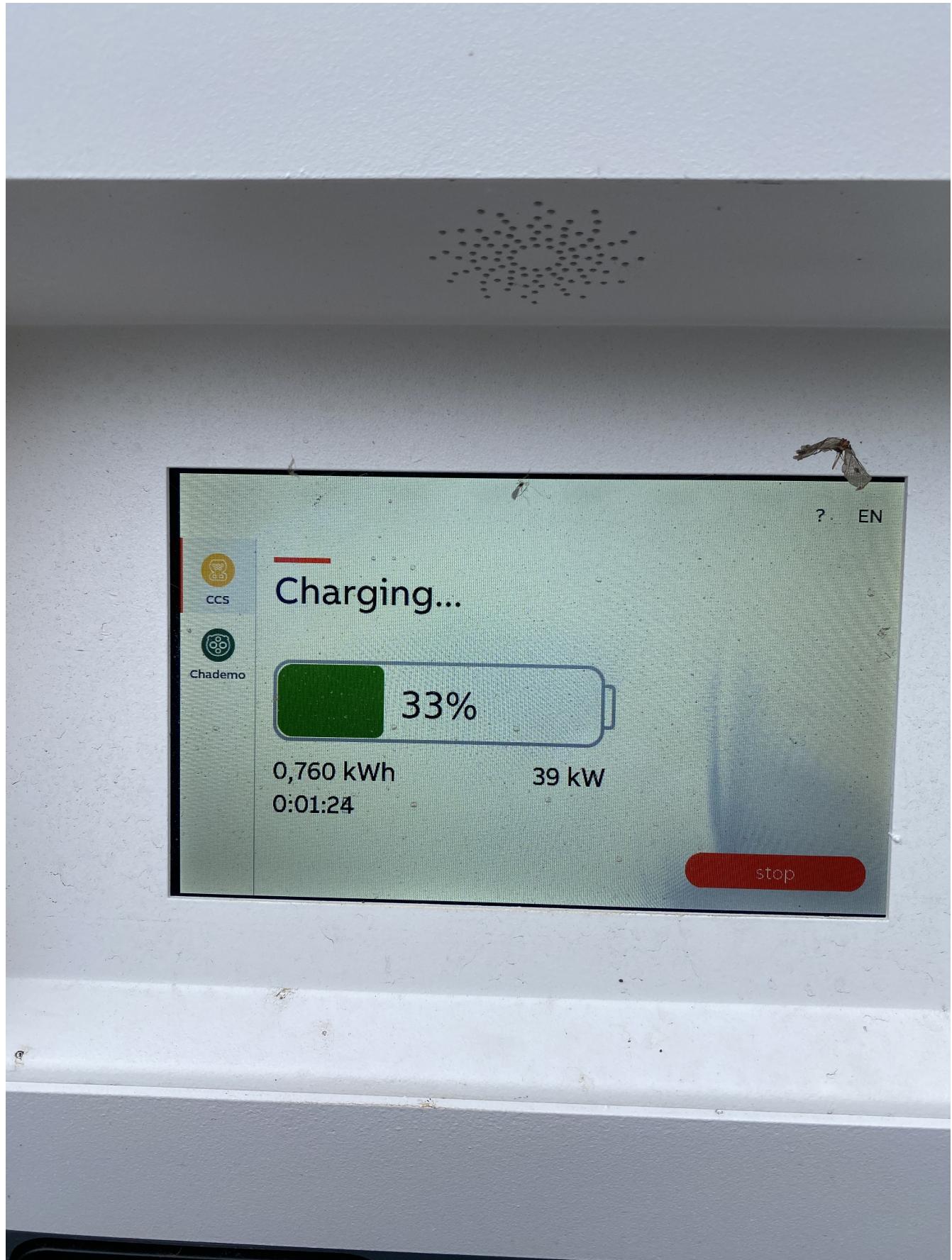


Figure 11. Woohoo it's charging..... ahhh 39. Plan more time again.

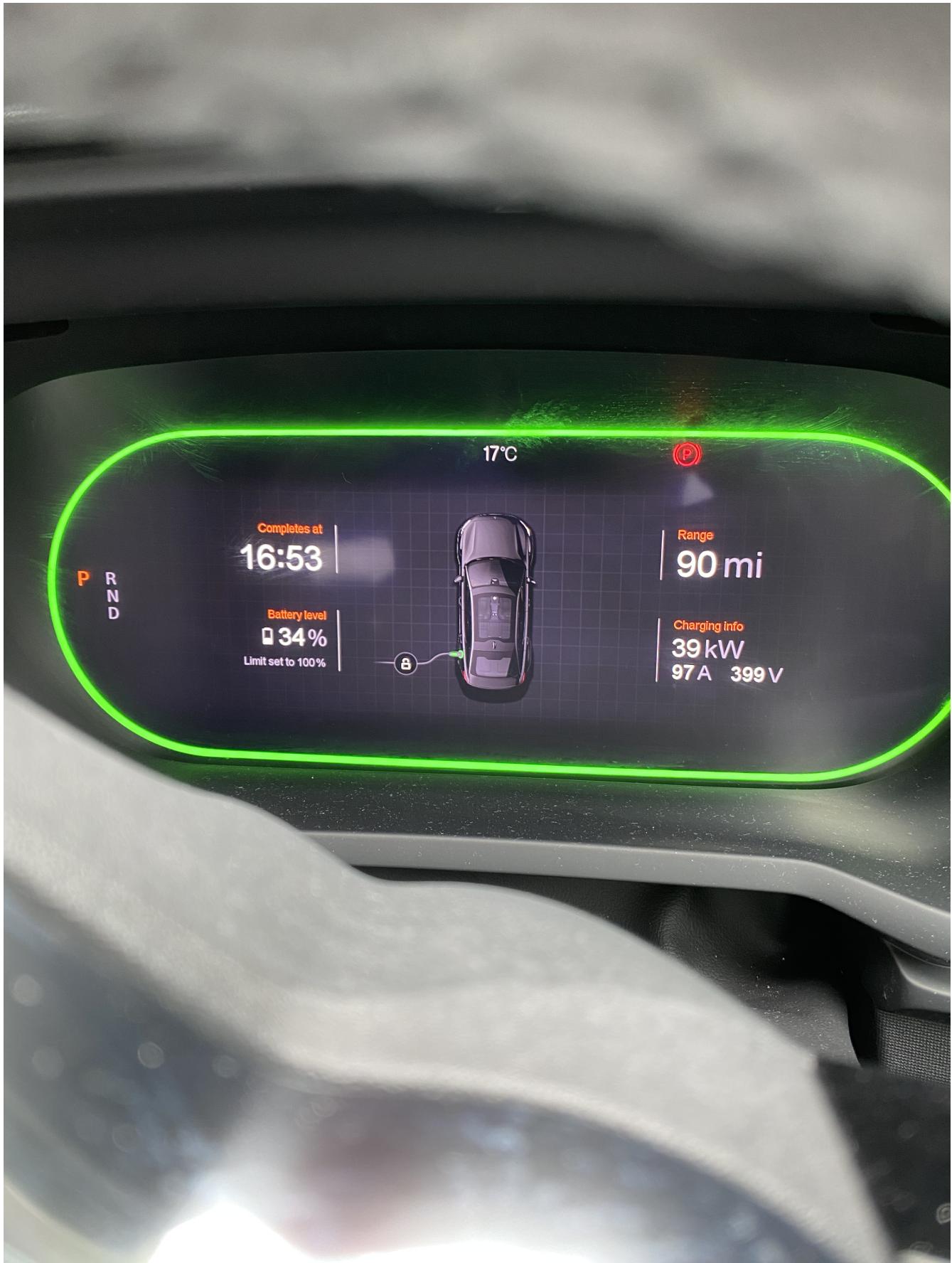
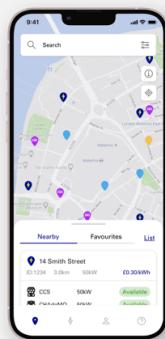


Figure 12. 39 instead of 50... but it's working



Figure 13. BPpulse

bppulseFind a public charger 

Download the bp
pulse app to enjoy
our best on the go
charging
experience

Download on the
App Store

Fit charging
around your
everyday

As your world turns on to electric, we'll
draw on more than a decade's expertise
to give you the energy to shape your

 bppulse.co.uk

Figure 14. Use the App...

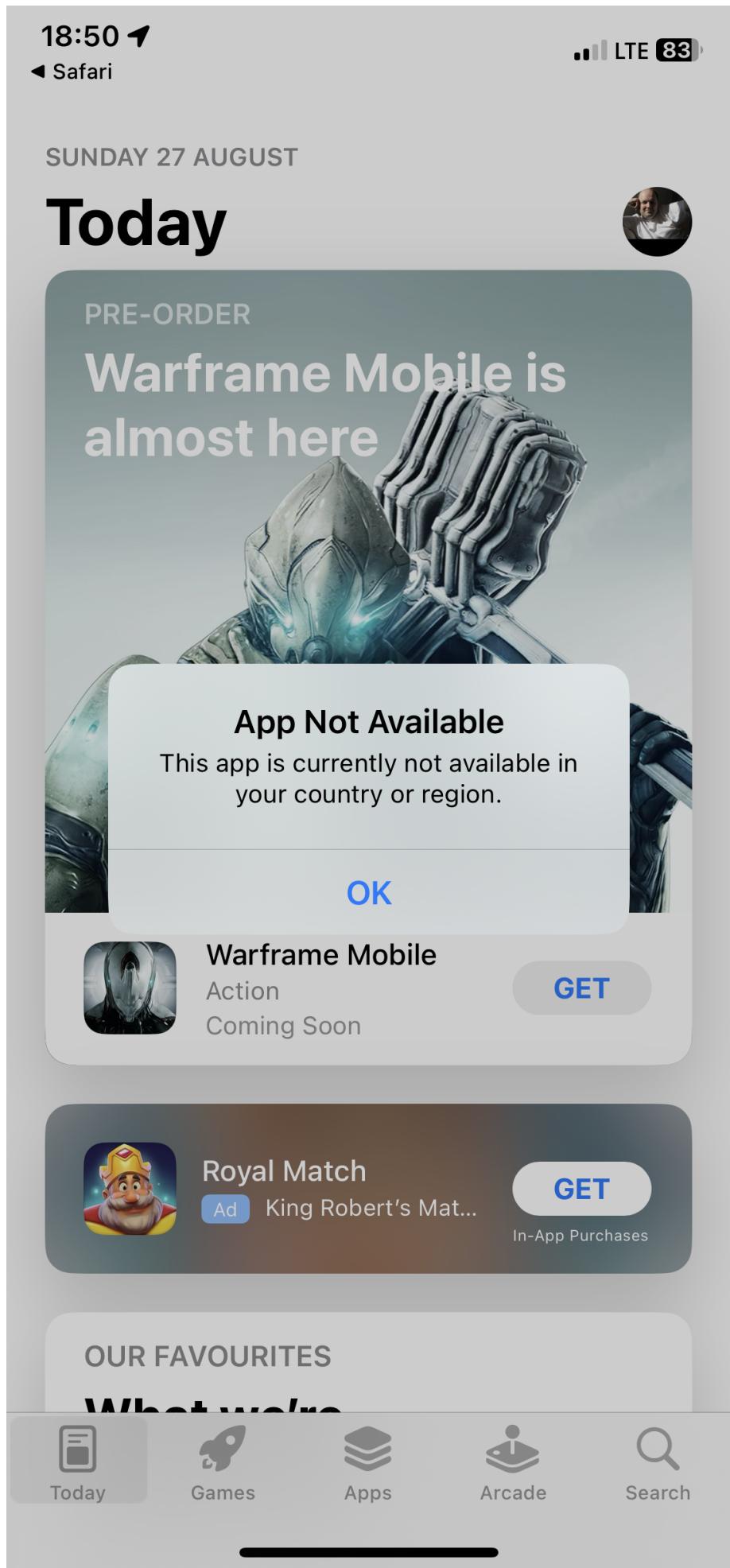


Figure 15. App not available for tourists

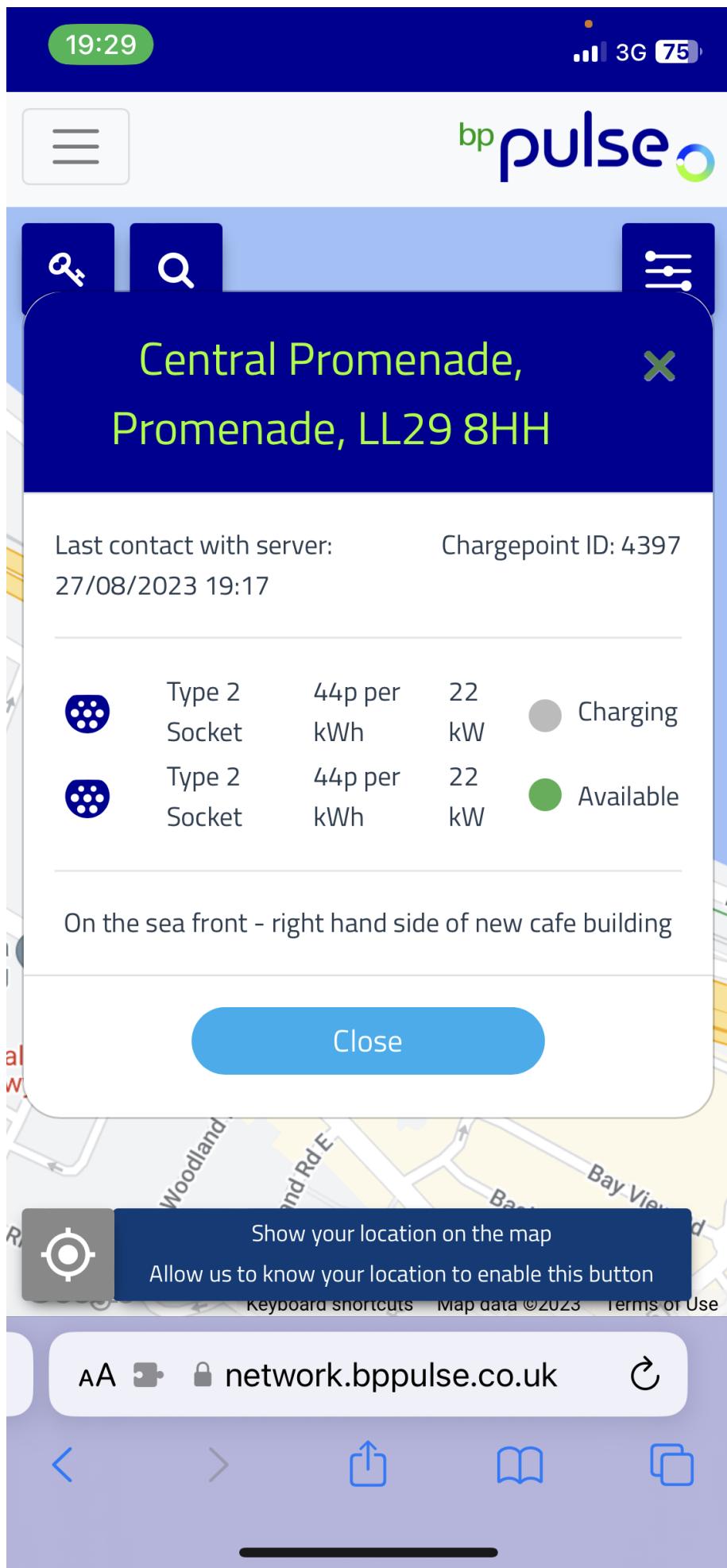


Figure 16. BPpulse map view... no way to activate

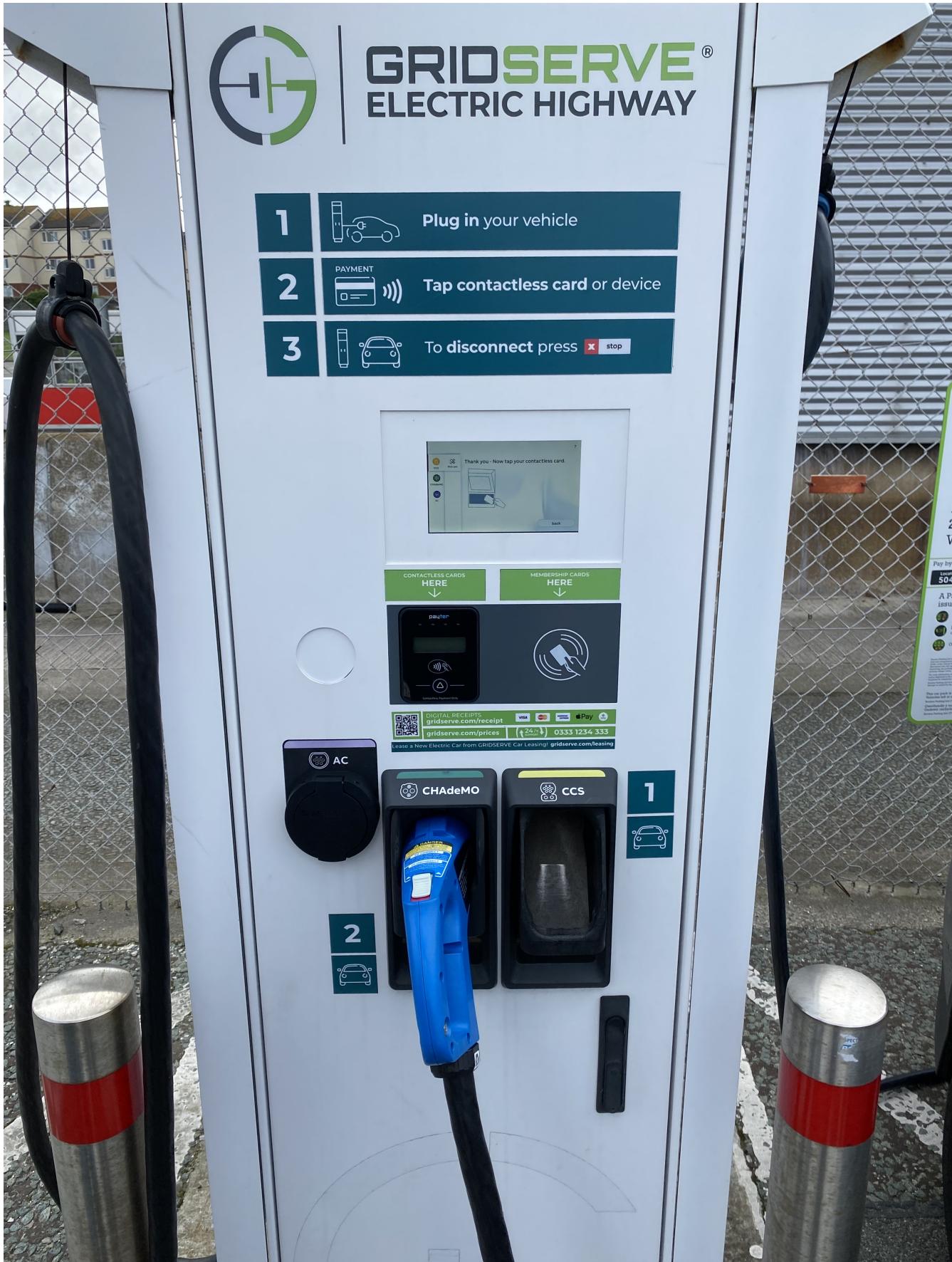


Figure 17. Had to have this one rebooted to get it to work



Figure 18. Let's add insult to injury. You can pay for parking while you wait for the charger to reboot

Just to add.. No the charger was not cheap but then neither was the parking.



Figure 19. Hertz closed but sign up to ring if closed...

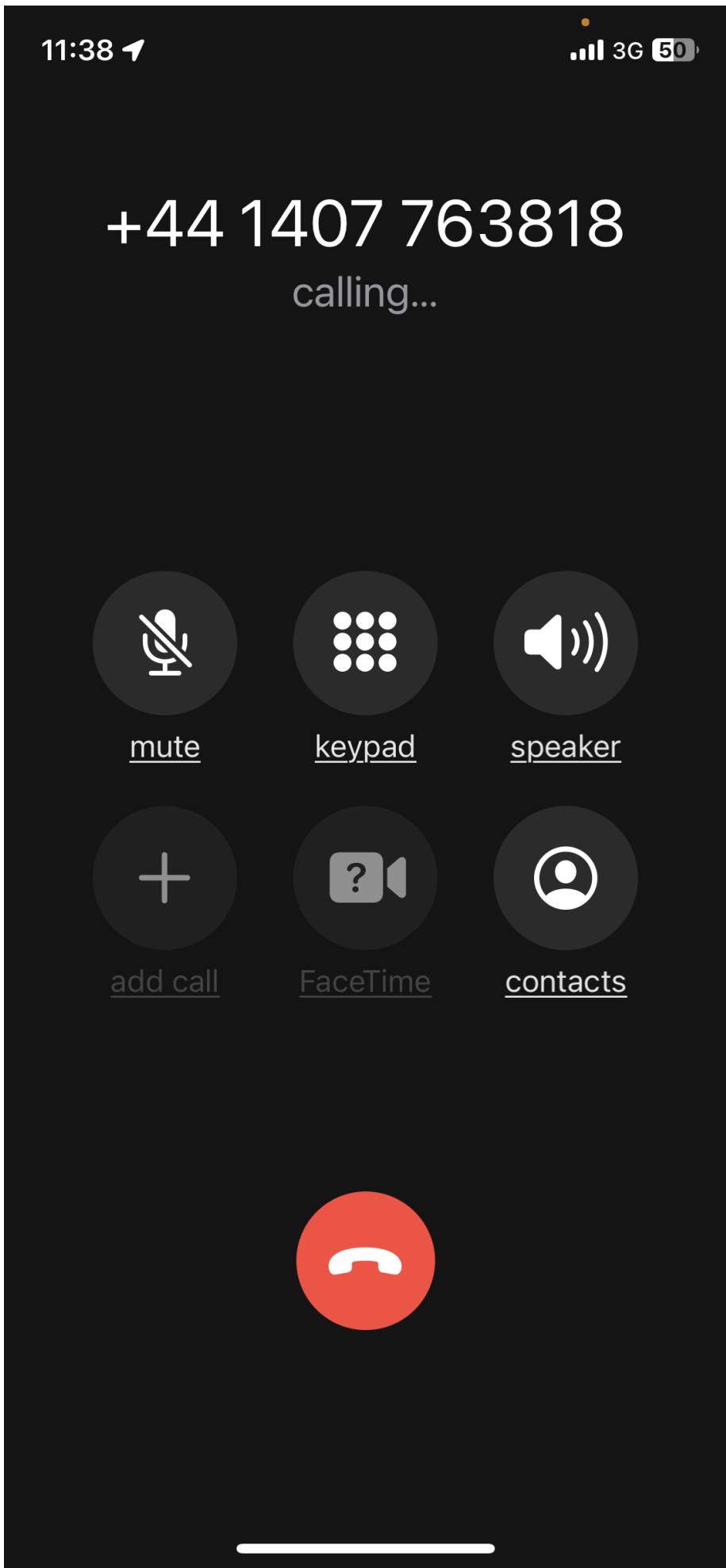


Figure 20. Let's call since the sign says to...

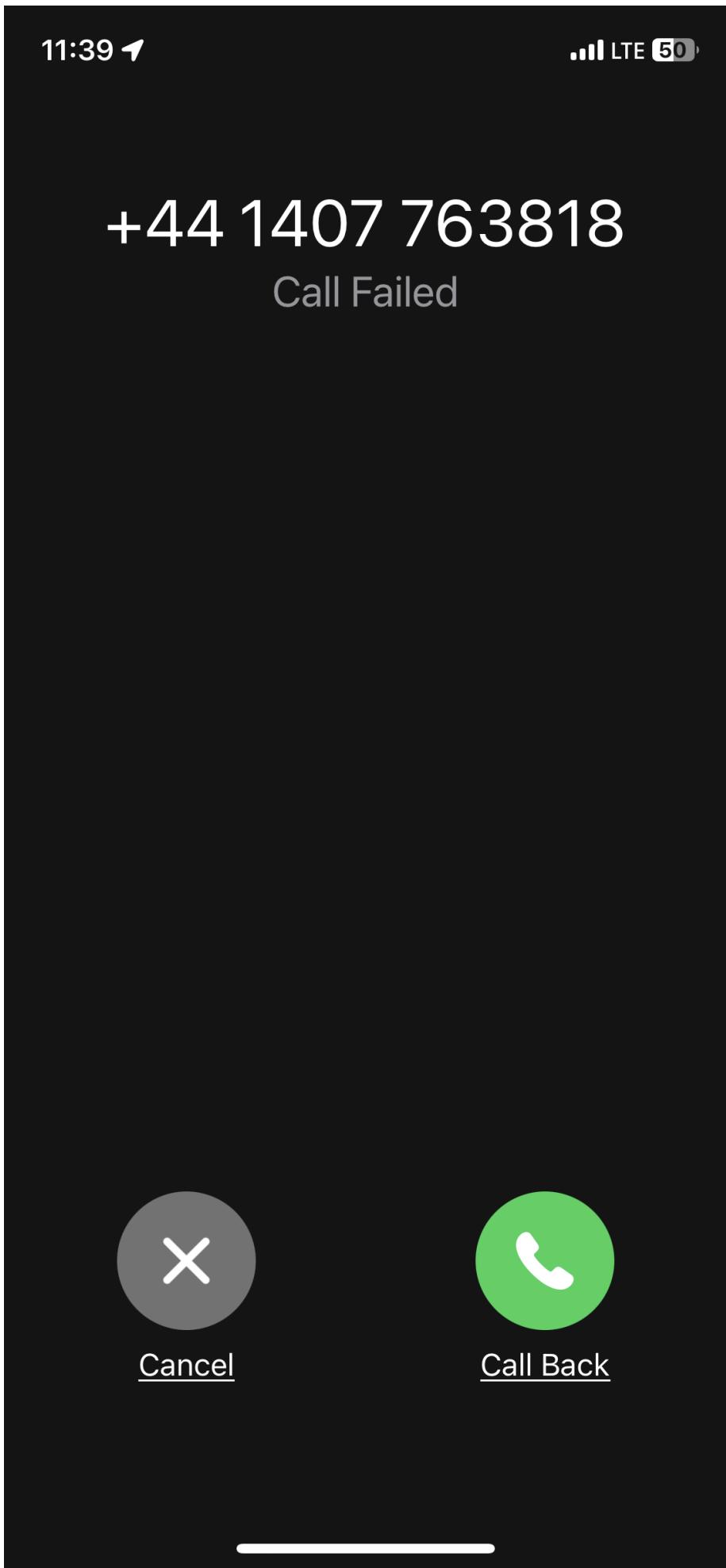


Figure 21. Ring ring ring ring ring.....beep beep beep

But at least you can hear it ringing behind the counter as you stand there.



Figure 22. Others trying their luck at returning a car at Holyhead



Figure 23. Returning it full



Figure 24. Overfill it as it will loose charge and you WILL be billed.

We returned it with 89% and Hertz logged it with 87%. We guessed this would be the case so made sure not to fall into that trap at least.



Figure 25. Glad to see this end of the car

Nice car if there is a charging infrastructure at nice places but there isn't a charging infrastructure in the Highlands and the ones that worked are not at nice places. So plan to spend lot's of time driving by nice places to get to not nice places and to spend plenty of time there.