



News

September 2017

Welcome!

In our latest newsletter we're exploring themes of transformation: From how fibre broadband can have an impact of the value of your home, how superfast broadband is transforming our lives and also how it's enabling businesses to work more efficiently. By now, we'll all be aware of nature's transformation from summer to autumn, seeing the browning of leaves and feeling a chill in the air, and as those darker nights creep in usage of devices in the home that are reliant on a fast broadband connection increase. Have an enjoyable read.



Matt Lloyd, head of Community Fibre Partnerships, Openreach

Cheshire IT company strikes a deal for ultrafast broadband



A Congleton industrial automation company has joined forces with Openreach to bring ultrafast broadband to its offices in Astbury. The company was the first business in the North West to sign up to the for our Community Fibre Partnerships scheme and is looking forward to getting the latest Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) technology capable of delivering ultrafast speeds up to one gigabit per second (Gbps).

Newfield Automation in, Astbury, provides technology solutions to automate processes and machinery to large global brands such as 3M, Bentley, Siemens and UK airports, including Manchester.

The company's 20 staff will benefit from the ultrafast speeds by Spring 2018. In addition, two other local businesses and the parish council will benefit from the investment as they have offices within the same premises.

Jonathan Meacham, IT manager at the firm, said: "We're stuck with slow speeds due to our rural location and as an industrial automation company this can make things difficult when running our business.

"We need to access a lot of software and currently we have to get that through the post. When our fibre broadband is up and running we will be able to instantly download it online so that will save us so much time and provide a much quicker service to our customers and partners.

"We will also be switching to Voice over IP for our phone calls so that will save us a lot of money being able to make calls using the internet.

"In the future we would like to start using the cloud for online storage and back up, something that we can't currently do with our slow speeds."

Newfield Automation's employees will also be able to work from home better due to the company's online systems running faster and more efficiently.

This Community Fibre Partnership was the fifth deal to be signed in Cheshire with Openreach, joining Ollerton, Tattenhall, Warburton and Kingswood Park in Frodsham communities in bringing fibre broadband to those areas not included in national fibre broadband rollout plans.

Superfast helps to keep house prices up to speed



It used to all be about ‘location, location, location’ but these days it seems that any number of things can influence the price of a property.

Some of these factors are quite quirky. For example, it’s said that the value of a house can go up significantly if there happens to be a branch of Waitrose nearby. Others believe that the number on the door of a property can affect its price.

A study by Zoopla, revealed that on average, odd-numbered properties sold for £538 more than even-numbered equivalents. However, growing evidence suggests that there’s one particular factor having one of the biggest impacts on property values in the modern age – superfast broadband.

All mod cons – including superfast

Today’s buyers want superfast. High connectivity speeds are becoming just as sought after as school catchment areas. That’s why estate agents tend to highlight superfast broadband speeds with the other particulars of a house for sale.

For example, Rightmove’s website includes a broadband tool on its website so that property hunters can find out about broadband speeds and availability. They recognise that lots of buyers are ready to pay more to get superfast. In fact, research from the Halifax research revealed that 20% of respondents said they would be prepared to pay more for a home if it had good broadband.

Martin Ellis, economist at Halifax, said: “A strong broadband connection is an increasingly important factor when choosing where to live. We are living in the digital age and as such more people are choosing to work from home, but as well as this it’s a part of our everyday lives with web browsing and streaming television commonplace.”

Paying a premium

He added: “As a result we find people are increasingly prepared to pay a premium for homes with a good broadband signal, and this is likely to remain a factor when choosing where to live.”

Findings from a London School of Economics study showed that on

average house prices increased by 3% when broadband speeds doubled.

While research carried out by ISP Review also found that some people would be willing to pay more for a home with faster broadband – nearly 6% said they’d pay 3-4% extra and almost 5% said 4% or higher. And according a GoCompare survey, while living in a good neighbourhood was ranked the top priority by two thirds (66%) of 2,000 people polled, 43% want a good, reliable broadband connection that was strong enough to stream TV and films. This is closely followed a specific desire for superfast broadband (39%).

All of this spells good news for buyers and sellers of homes that are connected to a superfast fibre network.

To date that includes more than 26.5 million premises up and down the UK that have access to superfast – a number that’s increasing all the time.

Adding more value

But what about those in the so-called ‘final five per cent’ of the population not included in any fibre rollout plans?

According to Steve Haines, Openreach’s managing director for Next Generation Access, more and more communities who don’t yet have fibre are turning to Openreach’s Community Fibre Partnership programme to get themselves connected and help sustain the values of their properties.

“I’m delighted to see an increasing number of communities up and down the UK striking co-funding deals, through our partnership programme, and getting themselves connected to Openreach’s superfast network. Not only are they able to enjoy all the benefits of superfast through a provider of their choice but they know that the connectivity they’ve helped organise will help keep the price of their homes buoyant.”

How superfast fibre broadband is transforming our lives

Broadband has changed our lives, allowing us to communicate quickly, entertain ourselves, get news from a range of sources and keep in touch with family members all over the world.

Superfast fibre optic broadband offers speeds up to five times faster than the average speed of standard UK broadband, and is available in more and more places. But what's been the impact of superfast broadband – and what will it allow us to do in the future?

Opportunities in rural areas

Fibre optic broadband is making a huge difference to the lives of those in rural areas. There are numerous benefits, enabling people to study remotely and access important services like the NHS for health information.

It also means there are more opportunities for people to live away from urban centres, choosing to work from home.

Superfast broadband has an economic impact, bringing opportunity and jobs to businesses and fibre broadband even has an environmental impact: things like making video calls, rather than driving to a meeting, can help reduce our carbon footprint.

Increased data use

On a more personal level, we're using the internet more and more. Ofcom says data consumption has doubled since 2012, with the average household using 58GB of data over broadband per month. And this is going to increase in the future, as we put more demands on our home broadband, so fast broadband will be essential.

Clever – and connected – gadgets

Within our homes, we're seeing more appliances that can connect to the internet – also known as 'the internet

of things'. Gadgets like the Nest Learning Thermostat, Philips Hue lighting system and Smarter iKettle – so-called smart devices – connect to the internet, meaning they can be controlled remotely using a smartphone. So if you're going to be late home, you can turn your heating off from your desk using your phone (meaning you save money!). Many connected devices can also work together: for example, if the Nest Protect smoke alarm detects a fire, it can communicate with the Nest thermostat, which automatically turns itself off.

Bigger, better storage

One of the most useful features of modern computing is the Cloud. The Cloud is a method of digital storage,

where the internet – rather than a device – is used to store your files.

Great entertainment

The days of being forced to choose between five terrestrial channels for an evening's entertainment are long gone. More of us are streaming and downloading shows and movies from services like BT TV or Netflix – which according to Ofcom 4.4 million household subscribe too.

The new standard in television is Ultra HD or 4K – which has four times the amount of detail as HD and requires a fast broadband connection, because it uses a lot of data. Ultra HD brings more realistic, lifelike images to our TV screens, and it's something more and more of us will be using in the future.

Whether it's the internet of things, downloading movies, uploading photos to the Cloud or watching Ultra HD TV, faster broadband is essential for quicker downloads, seamless streaming and more.



Celebrating creative business in the country

The finalists have been announced for this year's Rural Business Awards – and we're proud to sponsor the Best Rural Creative or Media Based Business category.

Business is all about connections and getting fibre broadband to more and more rural areas plays a massive part in creating a level playing field for firms up and down the country.

This is no more apparent than the creative and media sector. It has traditionally encouraged freelance and home-based workers, but in the digital age it relies on being able to share massive media files, such as hi-res photography design files and video content. Without a fibre broadband connection, that becomes almost impossible.

Openreach's Director of Fibre Broadband Clients, Steve Edwards, will be on hand to present the award. He said: "I'm absolutely delighted

to be part of the awards. It's a fantastic opportunity to get together and celebrate the very best rural businesses and to hear some of their inspiring stories. This year has seen entries from 52 counties in the UK and there have been nearly three times as many entries for the Rural Business Awards as in 2016.

The Rural Business Awards were established to recognise businesses that operate across the rural sector. And because we've helped get so many communities connected to faster broadband, we're just as passionate about firms that value their rural roots."

Rural Business Awards co-founder Jemma Clifford said: "The Rural Business Awards, now in its third year, gives rural enterprises of all sizes the opportunity to showcase their success and the contribution they are making to our thriving rural economy – just

the firms that have entered in 2017 have combined turnovers well in excess of £70m."

This year's shortlist of finalists in the creative and media category includes: Farm Creative, a marketing agency based in a working farm; Holdsworth PR which specialises in rural and equestrian businesses; Rural Maps, which has a global customer base; Rural Roots PR which is on a mission to get millennials into the countryside; and The Artisan Food Trail, which works to raise awareness of rural food and drinks brands.

You can find out more about all the finalists on the [Rural Business Awards website](#).

It's a very talented and dynamic group of businesses and the judges will have a hard job choosing a winner. We wish them – and everyone involved in the awards – the very best of luck.



THE RURAL BUSINESS AWARDS

in
partnership
with



Increased grant seals superfast deal in Devon

Residents of two Devon villages have agreed a partnership with Openreach for the roll-out of high-speed fibre broadband.

About 160 households in Hockworthy and Holcombe Rogus are set to get access to the latest Fibre-to-the-Cabinet (FTTC) technology after extensive engineering work is completed.

They're among many UK communities to benefit from a grant scheme aimed at bringing superfast fibre broadband to parts of the country particularly hard-to-reach. More than £26,000 was awarded towards the cost of making faster fibre broadband available to the local school, Webbers Church of England Primary School in Holcombe Rogus, and the two villages.

The grant scheme is part of the Community Fibre Partnerships programme, and eligible communities can apply for match funding towards the cost of a new local fibre network as long as the technology is capable of serving the local school.

Hockworthy and Holcombe Rogus are the first communities in the UK to benefit from the maximum grant available being increased from up to £20,000 to up to £30,000.

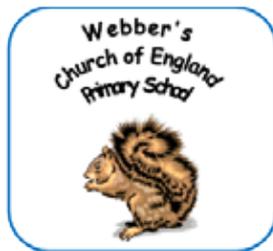
Faster speeds are welcomed by local households, who, increasingly,

are connecting a variety of devices to the internet at the same time for entertainment, research and education, whilst businesses use the high-speed technology to deliver new services to new customers and to boost competitiveness.

Better access to essential online services, easier Skyping of friends and family and quicker sending and receiving of documents and large files are among the benefits.

The extensive engineering work will see Openreach install new fibre optic cabling and two new fibre broadband cabinets. Hockworthy resident Louise Webber, who led a local campaign for an upgrade, said: "Having good quality broadband is now an essential part of modern day life. When

we knew that we were not included in any current broadband upgrade plans, we decided it was essential for us to take action. "Fibre broadband can't come quickly enough for us all. Many people in the village can only get broadband speeds of less than 2 Mbps. I can get 2.7 Mbps, but the speed is variable, streaming online content is not possible and downloading a box set can take a couple of days."



Steve Haines, managing director of Next Generation Access for Openreach, said: "We've already made fibre broadband available to more than two million homes and businesses across the South West thanks to our own private investment and partnerships with the public sector and local communities – and we are determined to go much further. Recent improvements to the Community Fibre Partnerships programme have included increasing the maximum grant available to £30,000. This exciting technology is providing a vital boost for households and businesses across the region because whatever you do online you can do it better with faster broadband."

Available schemes to help pay for your fibre



Depending on where you live in the country there are various grants available that you could use toward the cost of jointly paying for fibre within your community. For example:

Windfarm Community Funds

– these schemes generally make grants available to the community and voluntary organisations for projects which will benefit the wider community located within a certain distance of a given wind farm. If there's a windfarm near to your community it's definitely worth checking if you're eligible for funding toward fibre, several communities have successfully done this.

BT Grant – available to any community in the UK not covered by fibre broadband rollout plans to apply for funding to cover three quarters of the cost of the new fibre infrastructure, up to £30,000, if that new infrastructure serves the local school and is delivered by Openreach.

Access Broadband Cymru – available in Wales only, this scheme provides grants to fund (or part-fund) the installation costs of new broadband connections for homes and businesses. Find out more [here](#).

Calor Gas Fund – now closed for 2017 but will reopen in 2018, this fund is applicable for rural communities with projects off the mains gas grid. More information's [here](#).

Ultrafast Ditcham digs for victory



“By working with the Openreach Community Fibre Partnership programme and opting for self-dig, Ditcham’s school and community has saved itself well in excess of £100,000. What’s more, we’ve now got access to ultrafast speeds of up to 330Mbps – and that is undeniably brilliant.”

Chris Tae, resident and broadband campaigner

Making the fibre dream a reality

Last year, the Hampshire rural Hamlet of Ditcham became the first UK community to benefit from a BT grant aimed at bringing superfast fibre broadband to parts of the country, which are hard-to reach.

The Hamlet, and its local school – Ditcham Park – joined the superfast broadband revolution after taking advantage of a BT schools grant. More than £17,500 was awarded to help connect the school and the local houses along the route to the Openreach fibre network.

Now, the community is enjoying ultrafast download speeds of up to 330Mbps – more than 50 times faster than its previous broadband service.

Although the grant from BT was instrumental in making Ditcham’s fibre dream a reality, the community’s willingness to ‘get digging’ also made a massive difference, as Ditcham

resident and broadband campaigner Chris Tae explains: “We opted to self-dig after I explained that doing so would save us money and help speed up the fibre deployment process.”

“So, once we started speaking with Openreach through the Community Fibre Partnership programme I stepped in and explained how we’d be able to take charge of all the digging needed to complete the infrastructure.”

Added Chris: “Openreach was incredibly supportive from the get-go. I told them we’d be happy to design the route, liaise with all the land-owners and organise the actual digging ourselves, but they would have to supply the necessary ducting and the chambers.”

“And they did so no problem. In fact, they gave us lots of valuable advice as we were planning the dig. For example, they told us we’d need to put in a chamber every 300 yards and extra chambers where the route bended. They gave us confidence that we were doing everything correctly.”

Working hand-in-hand with Openreach

Chris, who works as an entrepreneurial property developer, determined that he would need to hire in two sub-contractors to do the digging – one to carry out open field digging and the other to dig roads and soft verges, using a small machine digger.

“Everything functioned flawlessly,” he said. “We completed 6.5 kilometres of trenching in less than six weeks. Once we were done, the Openreach team arrived, to install the fibre in the ducts and connected us to the network – which I’m thrilled to say gives us access to some amazing speeds.”

Said Chris: “It all happened at lightning pace. I first contacted Openreach in May and, because we did the digging ourselves, and had great support from the local landowners, we were all switched on by late September. I doubt there is any other community scheme that has managed to complete the process that fast.

As the project was funded by Ditcham Park School, they were understandably thrilled to receive the BT Schools grant to partially fund the self-dig project.

“Just like Openreach, Ditcham Park School was incredibly supportive of the proposal,” said Chris. The school had to find a way of getting better connected, and this proved to be by far the best and most affordable way to get it done.

“The school had been previously quoted a significant sum to get a leased line installed – which would have also incurred a substantial monthly cost. “The self-digging and the Community Fibre Partnership programme has saved them circa £100k of capital cost, and another £1,350 or so per month in ongoing charges.”

Added Chris: “That’s why I’d urge other UK communities without fibre to explore the idea of self-digging. If you’ve got a can-do attitude, and don’t mind getting your hands a bit dirty then, with the right support, you really can make it happen.”

Rural brewery celebrates the arrival of ultrafast broadband thanks to a Community Fibre Partnership

Celebratory beers flowed at an award-winning rural brewery when it took delivery of some of the fastest broadband in the UK.

The latest Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) broadband technology – delivering speeds many hundreds of times faster than those previously available – has been installed at Otter Brewery, set in the remote Luppitt Valley, near Honiton in Devon.

Extensive engineering work was needed, including the installation of about four kilometres of underground and overhead cabling.

The project was co-funded by the brewery and Openreach as a community fibre partnership. The new network for the brewery has also made FTTP, capable of download speeds up to one gigabit per second (Gbps), viable for a small number of nearby homes, which are also in very rural locations.

Patrick McCaig, managing director of Otter Brewery, said: “We’re already finding that ultrafast broadband is giving our business a major boost. Everything we do online now works



so much more quickly and efficiently. Our remote and rural location helps to give the beers that we produce their purity and character, the downside has always been that we have lagged behind in terms of connectivity.

“Ultrafast will be a vital part of the future development of the business whether we are communicating online with our customers and suppliers or using the technology to work more efficiently. It has already strengthened our infrastructure as we continue to expand the business which includes greater use of e-commerce and a recent redesign of the Otter Brewery website.”

Steve Haines, managing director of Next Generation Access for Openreach, said: “Bringing this exciting technology to Otter Brewery was a major job involving several months of work by our engineers. The success of this project shows the power of working together in partnership to find a solution and of Openreach’s commitment to making high-speed broadband available as quickly as possible as widely as possible. Openreach is leading the way in rolling out this technology and, in doing so, making a major contribution to the future success and prosperity of communities across the country.”

Neil Parish, MP for Tiverton and Honiton, said: “It’s great that ultrafast fibre broadband has now come to Otter Brewery. Fibre broadband is an immensely exciting technology, which can provide very fast speeds. It will transform opportunities for households and businesses across the UK and I want it to be available throughout my constituency. It is a top priority for me.”



Thinking about having a fibre partnership with us to get your community transformed into the digital superfast lane? Take a look at a [short video](#) we’ve created which you may find useful to share with your neighbours who would also be set to benefit.

[f/fibrecommunity](#) [@fibrecommunity](#)

www.communityfibre.openreach.co.uk

Here at Openreach, we’re committed to working with all communities to find a fibre solution, and our Community Fibre Partnership scheme is designed to do just this.