

Email from the Ellisfield Parish Council (Monday, October 13 2014)

Superfast Broadband

The Hampshire Superfast Broadband programme is proceeding as planned but will not include Ellisfield for the time being. It is likely that by the end of 2015 we will be stranded in the pool of the last 3,500 properties in the county with a broadband speed of less than 2 Mbps. We have the opportunity to leapfrog the queue and place a contract directly with BT Openreach for “fibre to the cabinet” superfast broadband. BT would deliver the “fibre to the cabinet” service around 9 months after contract signature.

There are many benefits of fast broadband speeds, social, quality of life or raw economics. Whether you use the internet or even own a computer, the value of your house will be affected.

The Telegraph had an article in March about Slow Broadband Wiping 20% off house prices:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/broadband/10671273/Slow-broadband-wipes-20-off-house-prices.html>

Here is an excerpt that says it all....

“Slow broadband speeds can wipe as much as 20 per cent off the value of properties and lack of superfast connectivity in an area can be a deal-breaker in house sales, property experts have said. With growing numbers of people going online to perform tasks ranging from working to grocery shopping and streaming entertainment, good broadband has become critical. Property search website Rightmove has now added a broadband speed checker to every one of its listings alongside factors such as quality of local schools and transport links.”

Here is a similar article from the Guardian dated early March:

<http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/mar/02/fast-broadband-vital-to-homebuyers>

Daily Mail 2.3.14. Sam Webb wrote that slow broadband takes 20% off house prices.

Knight Frank 10.10.14. Sean Hobbs is quoted as saying that last month 2 buyers did not proceed with buying houses because of slow broadband.

Last Monday’s EPC meeting was well attended with BT presenting their proposed “fibre to the cabinet” solution to the village. Colin Brooks of BT Openreach discussed the details of their offer and the BT Area Director Peter Cowen was on hand to answer questions. The meeting concluded that we should press ahead with Ellisfield’s broadband project and launch a fundraising programme to raise the amount necessary to place an order with BT Openreach.

BT Offer

The village is connected to the Herriard exchange via two cabinets: one at the north end of the village at the junction between Church Lane and College Lane and the other outside the Fur and Feathers pub in Herriard. Four Ellisfield properties, on Berrydown Lane and Grammarsham Lane, are connected to different exchanges and so will not be covered by this initiative. The BT offer is

therefore in two parts but will be treated as a single project by EPC, with a total value of £66,329 plus VAT, provided there is universal interest across the village:

Ellisfield South

A new fibre-equipped cabinet would be installed at the junction between College Lane and the Axford Road. This would replace the connection to the cabinet outside the Fur and Feathers and covers 66 properties (Axford Road, College Lane below College Farm and Green Lane up to and including Farriers Field). £36,816 plus VAT (£558 + VAT/premise). Please note that this part of the project would have been many times more expensive were it not for the discovery of unused underground cable ducting running all the way to the bottom of College Lane.

Ellisfield North

The existing cabinet at the junction between College Lane and Church Lane would be converted to offer fibre to the cabinet services. This cabinet serves 50 houses plus the solar farm and anaerobic digester sites (Bell Lane, Green Lane from Meadow View, College Lane from College Farm, Church Lane, Northgate Lane and Bushywarren Lane). £29,513 plus VAT (£568 + VAT/premise).

Fibre to the Cabinet Service

The new service would be available on an opt-in basis, with the old ADSL broadband service remaining by default. Customers of the existing broadband service would be able to continue with their current contracts should they not wish to take advantage of the new fibre to the cabinet offering. The available download speeds on the new service would vary depending on the distance to the cabinet with a maximum of 80 Mbps for those immediately adjacent:

- Next to the cabinet 80 Mbps
- 200m 50 Mbps
- 300m – 500m 25 – 40 Mbps
- 500m - 900m 15 - 25 Mbps
- 900m 15 Mbps
- > 900m 10 -15 Mbps (there are some exceptions)

BT will be asked to give an indication of the precise speed for your property should you require it. If you would like this information please supply confirmation of your phone number to the Parish Council. BT Openreach would own the network going forward and be responsible for future upgrades. It is worth being aware that “fibre to the cabinet” maximum speeds of 1,000 Mbps have been achieved on an experimental basis by BT. Put another way the fibre to the cabinet service would improve our existing internet speeds by a factor of between 10 and 100 at the outset, with the prospect of a further 10 fold increase with future upgrades.

By our rough estimation 56 houses will be within 900m of a cabinet and 45 within 900m - 1,500m, leaving 16 houses, all in the settlement around the Fox, between 1,500m and 1,850m from a

cabinet. According to Openreach's estimates there are only 10 of these houses which may not receive 10 Mbps or more. 10 Mbps should enable downloads 5-10 times faster than at present.

Fundraising

We have been told that VAT may not apply to the BT quote and so we are assuming that the target is £66,329. Depending on the interest shown we could go ahead with either or both cabinets.

We are looking for pledges in the range of £500-£1,000 and clearly what you offer will depend on both your view of the importance of fast broadband and ability to pay. In some cases, for those willing to do so, we would like to request enhanced donations of £2,000-£3,000. Our first assumption is that we will try to raise all the money from the village. We may need to top up the Ellisfield's contribution with funds from local businesses and/or Hampshire County Council but in any scenario we need first to understand what we can expect from the village.

We ask that you reply to this email to let the Parish Council know what you are prepared to pledge over the next two weeks. Please be assured we wouldn't exercise your pledge until we are ready with the full amounts and able to sign a contract with BT. In addition we will keep the pledge amounts confidential unless you notify us to the contrary.

ELLISFIELD PROPERTIES MAP SHOWING DISTANCES FROM CABINETS

The map attached to the email has been added to this PDF (see separate page below).

The distance arcs are not very clear if viewed in a reduced window so the PDF is best viewed Full SIZED.

