

Broadband Update November 2015

WELL—IT'S HAPPENED...

Whaddon has at last entered the 21st century. It seems like it took forever, but it was pretty much on time apart from sorting out a few teething issues which delayed the final change of status to “accepting orders”.

In several years of dealing with village affairs, I don't think I have ever seen anything happen which pleases so many people and without a down-side! I'd like to thank everyone for their patience and forbearance in those last few weeks when one could feel the anticipation rising.

It is fair to say that what we are getting is much faster than even our most optimistic hopes were when the Connecting Cambridgeshire project began. We thought 24mbs speed was going to be good, but improvements in the technology have meant that the cabinet is running at 80mbs, and the speed you get depends on how far you are from that cabinet, and whether you take the “standard” 38mbs package or the “speed merchant” 76mbs one.

I think everyone is now aware of the BT Wholesale Availability tester. This gives the an estimate of what BT think you will be able to get based on what it knows about your location, line length, and so on. In general these estimates are not too over-optimistic, as you can see that the further you are from the cabinet, the lower the speeds.

The only exception to this is for those of you with Sky phone lines. Sky has its own equipment at the exchange, and one result of this is that some Sky lines show up on the tester, and others do not. What I would say about this is that if your line does not show up on the BT tester, it does NOT MEAN YOU HAVE TO STAY WITH SKY. That would be anti-competitive. But it does mean you have to push a little bit harder with other ISPs to get them to realise you can get broadband, and it is just Sky's system that is stopping your data from showing up. Why I do not really understand.

It's also possible that line tests may show up problems which may need fixing by BT before your line goes live. A few of these in Dyers Green were fixed before the start, but I have heard of one more in Meldreth Road. But so long as the problem is the other side of your master socket, it won't be your concern to fix, but it may delay things.

There are two install types, the one you do yourselves and one done by an engineer. Much depends on what your ISP does—most send out a router with instructions and you do it yourself. Sometimes an engineer is needed either to add a BT only additional modem, or because you have an old style phone socket (probably relatively unlikely).

So far we have a range of results around the village. For example:

Most of Church Street and top end of Bridge Street	60-70 mbs seems possible
Meldreth Road	From about 35 mbs to about 20 mbs at the village sign
Dyers Green	probably 25-35 mbs

These really are all beyond my wildest hopes and we have done very well for ourselves. Remember, for most people's purposes, the 38mbs package will be more than enough. Also

remember that if the BT tester shows you with a likely speed of not much over 40mbs, there is no point in paying extra for the 76mbs service. This is very important!

I would be most grateful if people could drop me a note with an indication of the sorts of speeds they are getting, so I can monitor the situation. The Speed Tester I usually tell others to use is the OOKLA one, sometimes called speedtest.net. This way I can build up a picture of how the village is performing and report it to the appropriate people.

This will probably be the last regular update I send out in the Whaddon News. I would like to conclude by thanking everyone again for their patience, but particularly by thanking Cambridgeshire County Council, and the staff of the Connecting Cambridgeshire project, for the funding and development of a scheme which is providing Whaddon with many of the benefits of a more “urban” connection without losing any of the things about the village that make us all live here and that make the place special. In so doing, we have also removed one obstacle which was starting to make some people think twice about moving here.

So go and order fibre broadband if you have not yet done so! We want Whaddon to go above the average Cambridgeshire village take-up of 60%.

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