



News release from Connecting Cambridgeshire – Wednesday 16 December, 2015

Rapid take-up of high speed fibre broadband in South Cambridgeshire village

Demand for superfast broadband is so high in a South Cambridgeshire village that take-up of high speed fibre has been amongst the fastest in the county.

Villagers in rural Whaddon are celebrating getting superfast speeds after enduring slow connections for years - despite being only ten miles from Cambridge.

Over half the households and businesses in the village have ordered fibre broadband within a month of the new street cabinet on Bridge Street going live.

Faster fibre broadband has been brought to the community as part of the Connecting Cambridgeshire superfast broadband roll-out programme, led by Cambridgeshire County Council, working with BT and Openreach, to reach areas that would not get it otherwise.

Whaddon's Broadband Champion, Nigel Strudwick, has led the community's campaign for better broadband, working closely with the Connecting Cambridgeshire team to find a solution and keep local people informed. He said:

"This shows just how important this new fibre connection is to people in Whaddon and it was worth agitating on behalf of the village to get faster broadband to get the village into the 21st Century. Without Connecting Cambridgeshire fighting our corner, we would not have got where we are now. It's the latest of a series of improvements to living in Whaddon and we are now looking to install Wifi in our refurbished Village Hall to make it more attractive for events."

Local families, farmers and home-based businesses have welcomed the superfast connections which they say will transform their lives.

John and Anne Warrack, who live on the edge of the village at Dyers Green, said: *"We feel as though we have finally joined the 21st century, as the new broadband makes using the Internet a joy rather than a nightmare. We're looking forward to Royston becoming 4G next!"*

Kate French, of Bridge Street, said: *"Before we had fibre broadband, it would take over 4 hours to download new software to our laptop - now it takes minutes and we can stream live TV at the same time. It has made a huge difference to us as a family of four, all with numerous connected devices - we no longer have to take it in turns to use the internet!"*

Farmer Stan Smith said: *"The new fibre optic has certainly made a big improvement to my business. Particularly with accessing all the agriculture compliance regulations from DEFRA and the Environment Agencies, together with banking online with*

Peter Haselden, Financial Director of Amex Travel UK, said: *"It has revolutionised our lives: I can work from home without having to apologise to colleagues that Skype won't work, the children are ecstatic that Clash of Clans no longer cuts in the middle of an attack, and my wife can watch BBC iPlayer in the kitchen to her heart's content without entering into the War of the Remote Control."*

Cambridgeshire County Councillor Ian Bates, Chairman of the Economy and Environment Committee, which oversees the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme, said:

“The rapid take-up of fibre broadband in Whaddon shows how important good connections are for our rural communities to thrive. There’s still more to do, which is why the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme is continuing to roll-out fibre to as many premises as we can.”

Many more Whaddon residents have placed orders for fibre packages with their Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and are hoping to be connected before Christmas.

BT has responded to the demand by doubling the capacity of the new all-in-one cabinet, which uses the latest technology to bring fibre broadband to rural areas.

Dave Hughes, BT regional director for the East of England, said: *“We’re delighted that the new superfast broadband has resulted in superfast take-up in this village. With more than half the village ordering within the first month of service, it shows how important it is to families and businesses to have fast internet connections. Whaddon is a great example of how the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme is bringing superfast broadband to communities which otherwise would not be getting it.”*

Visit www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk to find out if you can get fibre broadband
Find out more about what makes Whaddon special at www.whaddon.org/village_hall

Ends

Contacts

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Notes for Editors

Photo opportunity: Wed 16 December, 10.15am, Bridge Street, Whaddon, SG8 5SQ

Local villagers will gather at their new street cabinet with representatives of Connecting Cambridgeshire, BT and Openreach to celebrate the record take up of fibre broadband.

About Connecting Cambridgeshire www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk

The Connecting Cambridgeshire programme is led by Cambridgeshire County Council in partnership with Peterborough City Council, BT and the Government body BDUK, with the support of District Councils and partners in business, health and education.

Connecting Cambridgeshire is on track to bring high speed fibre broadband to well over 90,000 premises that would not be able to get it otherwise by the end of 2015, with more to come in 2016/2017. Combined with commercial plans by the private sector, the completed roll-out will give 98 per cent of homes and businesses access to fibre-based broadband - making Cambridgeshire one of the best connected counties in the country.

BT has already made high-speed fibre broadband available to more than 190,000 Cambridgeshire homes and businesses as part of its commercial deployment. The network is open to all broadband service providers on an equivalent basis which means households and businesses can upgrade to fibre broadband package of their choice.

About BT www.btplc.com.

BT's purpose is to use the power of communications to make a better world. It is one of the world's leading providers of communications services and solutions, serving customers in more than 170 countries. Its principal activities include the provision of networked IT services globally; local, national and international telecommunications services to its customers for use at home, at work and on the move; broadband, TV and internet products and services; and converged fixed/mobile products and services. BT consists principally of five customer-facing lines of business: BT Global Services, BT Business, BT Consumer, BT Wholesale and Openreach.

For the year ended 31 March 2015, BT Group's reported revenue was £17,979m with reported profit before taxation of £2,645m. British Telecommunications plc (BT) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BT Group plc and encompasses virtually all businesses and assets of the BT Group. BT Group plc is listed on stock exchanges in London and New York.

About Openreach

Openreach is responsible for the last mile of the UK access network – the copper wires and fibre connecting homes and businesses to their local telephone exchanges – and provides communications providers with services and products associated with that network.

About BDUK www.gov.uk/broadband-delivery-uk

Superfast Britain is a Government programme of investment in broadband and communication infrastructure across the UK. Run by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, this investment helps businesses to grow, creates jobs and will make Britain more competitive in the global race. The portfolio is comprised of three elements:

£780m to extend superfast broadband to 95% of the UK by 2017

£150m to provide high speed broadband to businesses in 22 cities

£150m to improve quality and coverage of mobile phone and basic data network services.

Administered on behalf of Government by Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), Superfast Britain is transforming Britain by promoting growth, enabling skills and learning, and improving quality of life.