

Superfast or Ultrafast Broadband?

Thanks to everyone who registered for the BT Community Fibre Programme, intended to bring everyone up to “superfast” speeds of at least 25 Mbps. Our application was submitted in December and we are told that we should receive the indicative costing in March. The 66 premises included are scattered throughout the parish, so we can expect to be asked to raise a very substantial sum. A map of the approximate locations has been posted on the web site.

Meanwhile, an alternative enduring and inclusive solution has been presented to us. We now have an exciting new opportunity to bring a pure and dedicated fibre optic connection to every home and business in need. Unlike the last upgrade, which deployed Fibre To The Cabinet (FTTC), this Fibre To The Premises/Home (FTTP/FTTH) infrastructure enables “ultrafast” broadband speeds from 100 to 1000 Mbps, and is “future proof” by upgrading to even faster services when available. In contrast to existing services, every subscriber actually gets the speed paid for, wherever they are located, in both directions (i.e. upload and download). This is the symmetric gigabit technology which everybody would want in the ideal world. I have been searching for a possible service provider for years, but until now I was unable to interest anyone in our situation. Luckily the increased political support in October encouraged one company in the fibre installation business to look into the gaps in BT’s superfast coverage in rural Surrey. As a result, we were able to invite Box Broadband to come and explain their plans at an open meeting in the EYSC in January. The event was well attended, but those who missed it can read a full report on our web site.

Rather than asking the community to fund-raise a proportion of the installation and set-up costs, Box have initially proposed zero up-front charges to minimise the “barriers to entry”. This could result in a monthly service charge of £56.60 for 100 Mbps on a two year contract (assuming at least 300 customers sign up). Ignoring first year promotions, this can be compared to £54 for BT’s “up to” 76 Mbps service (taking line rental into account). Alternatively, Box are very willing to consider a community owned scheme, government funding, or any other practical suggestions.

Box Broadband first need to know whether there is sufficient demand to make such a project viable. Being a very different proposition to the BT Community Fibre Programme, and because this time there are no eligibility criteria (it is open to all); anyone interested in an ultrafast broadband service must register with Box Broadband Limited. This can be done online on the fledgling Box Broadband web site (which will be fully developed over time), or by email to me. Any questions can be asked in the same way. Thank you for your support. *David Nye*

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Read more at www.ewhurst-broadband.org.uk

Register interest with Box Broadband Limited at www.boxbroadband.co.uk