

Codrington Internet Petition

Status - 4th March 2016

Some updates on where we are with getting better Internet infrastructure in Codrington and the surrounding area.

Many thanks John/Charlie for the extra petition slips you dropped around.

I attended a Dodrington parish council meeting on 3/3/2016 with Claire Young and had the opportunity to talk to those present about the issues. They were very sympathetic, many having issues in their own local areas and quite informed on the importance of having a decent Internet connection. They voted to support our campaign. Christine Howard also asked if I could attend the local councils broadband briefing meeting in her place so I could put the points across.

I attended the local councils broadband briefing session along with Claire and Hannah (from Dodrington Parish council). A brief list of the main points from that meeting follows:

- There were a number of people there representing rural areas of South Gloucestershire. Matthew Lloyd of BT was present to answer questions.
- Questions were asked of why Bradley Stoke was funded as a non commercially viable area over more rural areas. Basically, at the time, BT/Openreach said it was commercially not viable.
- The vast majority of the urban areas in the South Gloucestershire area have been upgraded and it is now mainly the rural areas that the council are focussing on.
- The council have about £2 million to spend (Phase1 clawback, BDUK and LC funds) to assist a commercial company to install super-fast broadband. They state that this funding will allow them to upgrade a lot but not all of the rural areas.
- The council may be able to obtain, up to, a further £3 million for ultra-fast broadband for businesses (> 100 Mbits/s). They need to find £1.5 million in LC match funding to the BDUK's £1.5 million to do this though (They have about £145k at the moment). They have suggested they would use most of this to assist in updating rural businesses in conjunction with the rural homes if they can obtain it.
- They can go with BT/Openreach and start installing fairly quickly or they can go through a bidding processes with other suppliers included (Gigaclear etc). This would take about 6 months.
- Once an area has been updated to super-fast broadband no further public money can be spent on that area under current rules.
- They asked for feedback to prioritise a list of items in order for them to judge the best route and how to judge potential suppliers merits. Some of these include: future proofing, availability of ISP's, time to install etc.

I have also been in discussions with some people from Elberton and the Horton area. In particular the FTTC installation in Horton is not delivering better service to quite a few of the residents of the local area. I have also been trying to quiz BT/Openreach over why they are using FTTC rather than FTTP for the rural areas.

FTTC: A hybrid-fibre technology where a green cabinet, with active electronics, is installed with fibre to the exchange but the existing copper telephone cable is used to connect the houses. This has a major disadvantage in rural areas as the speeds/reliability people get is dependent on how far they are away from the green cabinet. In order to get around 50 Mbits/s, the premises needs to be less than 600 metres from the cabinet. Also uplink speeds are restricted and future speed updates not possible without extending the fibre towards homes.

FTTP: True fibre technology where fibre is installed all the way to the businesses and homes. Reliable and with

no speed reduction with distance, everyone gets the same performance. Greater than 300 Mbits/s available now and extremely high speeds possible in the future. Uplink speeds can be the same as downlink speeds.

BT/Openreach have been favouring FTTC in South Gloucestershire even in rural areas. Other providers, such as Gigaclear (who provide up to a symmetrical 1 Gbit/s service) use FTTP and many other providers are coming on-line to provide this technology. Ofcom are pushing this.

I am concerned that BT will fob off the local council and rural people with an obsolete FTTC solution that will be ok for some living close to the box, but will be no use to others living further away. This is Codrington's situation as the properties are widely spaced. Also once an area has been upgraded then, by current rules, no further public money can be spent in the area, so those properties will be left with what they have. Also in 5-10 years time, when higher Internet speeds will be needed, the rural areas will again be in the same boat again.

BT/Openreach state that a FTTP installation costs significantly more. However, I'm not sure this is actually the case for a rural area. The costs of an FTTP installation in an urban area are high. In this case most properties are connected by underground cables. It is the digging of roads, pavements and gardens which costs a lot of money. In rural areas most properties are connected using overhead cables so a lot of the touted extra costs do not apply. Also these overhead cables are likely to need replacing in the next 10 years or so anyway and so the effective install costs are lower. No green box and associated electronics is needed with FTTP saving this cost.

Anyway, good news is that there is a good chance we will get upgraded. The question is how long and what technology would be used. Attached is a list of the pro's of FTTP over FTTC in rural areas.

I have created a simple website containing information on the Codrington Broadband Internet campaign.
<http://codrington.beamweb.co.uk/>

Has any one any views on if they think it is better to wait perhaps an additional 6 months or more for an FTTP solution or to have an FTTC solution (mainly just Codrington village) quicker ?

Events

12/8/15	Emails to Luke Hall, Clare Young, Local Council, Parish Council, BT
18/8/15	Local Council: "we can confirm that Codrington is part of the Phase 2 'Intervention Area"
24/9/15	Investigated "Connections Voucher Scheme". Codrington's Postcodes were not on the list. Claire Young helped get our postcodes added. However the "Connections Voucher Scheme" was coming to an end and there did not seem to be a way it would help us anyway.
18/11/15	Local Council: "At the moment, cabinet Chipping Sodbury 29 is not in the current plans to be upgraded to fibre as part of the council's Phase 2 project"
20/1/16	Check out BT Community Project, Virgin Media
22/1/16	Virgin Media: I've had a look at the address below and we aren't able to get to you with broadband at this stage.
2/2/16	Meeting between Codrington people and Claire Young. Decided to instigate a Petition and get some media attention in the Gazette first.
11/2/16	Contacted some other possible providers: Gigaclear etc.
17/2/16	Petition presented to a full South Gloucestershire council meeting. Petition had approximately 60 properties of which 17 were small businesses.
21/2/16	Email sent to local council, department of culture, media and sport and BT

22/2/16	Replies from local council and Bill Murphy of BT. BT said they would investigate and said there was an additional chunk of money being made available.
24/2/16	List of addresses, and landline numbers sent to BT to investigate costs
3/3/16	Gazette article published
9/3/16	Dodington parish council meeting
14/3/16	South Gloucestershire local council broadband briefing

Area	Codrington, south of Chipping Sodbury
Contact name	Dr Terry Barnaby
Email	terry@beam.ltd.uk
Number of signatures	Approx 70
Number of properties	Approx 60
Number of these that have businesses activities	Approx 24
People affected	Businesses and employees, families
BT/Openreach cabinet (most are served by this)	29
Document on providing Codrington with Internet	Codrington Internet Provision