

Make the Switch!
 To discover what fibre can do for you, you must opt-in by contacting your ISP

Monthly Update

A roundup of what's been going on in the programme during December

Village downloads early Christmas present from Connecting Shropshire

An historic village in north east Shropshire received an early Christmas present from the Connecting Shropshire fibre broadband partnership that will put it at the forefront of the digital information age. Villagers in Adderley, near Market Drayton, can count on their broadband speeds improving significantly following the arrival of faster fibre broadband – with some homes and businesses who opt for an upgrade seeing a 100-fold increase in their broadband download speeds.



Adderley Parish Councillors celebrate the advent of fibre broadband with Shropshire Councillor Paul Wynn (on the right hand side)

The early Christmas present was delivered by Connecting Shropshire partners, Shropshire Council and BT. The majority of the village's 100-plus premises will be able to access superfast broadband speeds of 24 megabits per second (Mbps) or above, and the average download speed will increase from 0.45Mbps to nearly 59Mbps. Go to <http://bit.ly/1yeQ08w> to read the full story.

Business Focus - Bridgnorth cinema transforms its business with fibre broadband



The Majestic Cinema in Bridgnorth

We recently spoke to James Frizzell the manager of the Majestic Cinema in Bridgnorth. Opened in 1937, the cinema has upgraded to a fibre broadband service, which means that the films that it screens can now be downloaded in a matter of minutes, rather than hours.

Hear what James has to say on this short YouTube video, <http://bit.ly/15c4CcX>

Fibre optic broadband enables businesses to become more competitive by accessing technologies that are likely to reduce costs and improve productivity. Faster broadband can also facilitate mobile and home working, and makes all online activity faster and more efficient. The Optimising Business Broadband project can help businesses find out how, see: <http://bit.ly/1lvDZqY>

Fibre fact-finding expedition

Once again, we sent our roving reporter Callum to see the work 'in the field' for Connecting Shropshire, this time he was sent to where the journey begins for fibre optic broadband – the main telephone exchange or 'head end' (These exchanges, not local telephone exchanges, serve all the fibre cabinets). Callum began by heading into the depths of the Shrewsbury telephone exchange to where it all starts. To the untrained eye, it instantly reminds you of the footage of a computer from 1960s. Huge blinking, electrical cabinets fill the room, whirring away like a caffeinated wasp.

The very start of the fibre optic journey is here, in the intriguingly named Optical Line Termination (or OLT to its friends). Fibre cables are attached to individual connecting points – or ports – here, each flashing merrily away if they are fully operational, before stretching out and into another, similarly large, cabinet called the Optical Consolidation Rack (OCR).



Optical Consolidation Rack: The trays wrap the individual fibres.



Optical Line Termination

Read more at: www.connectingshropshire.co.uk/2015/01/fibre-fact-finding-expedition-2/

National campaign

Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) launched and funded a national campaign before Christmas to spread the word about the government's £1.7 billion plan to provide speeds of 24Mbps or more to UK homes and businesses. You

may have seen the 40 second TV advert which welcomes viewers to the "superfast nation." It ends with the tagline, "Now's the time to get superfast broadband" and directs viewers to the gov.uk/gosuperfast website. Connecting Shropshire is part-funded by BDUK and, whilst there is still much work to be done over the remaining two years of the programme, we've already provided thousands of premises with access to superfast speeds of 24mbps and above, as illustrated by the next story...

Superfast broadband comes to Much Wenlock

More than 1,000 residents and businesses in Much Wenlock are being encouraged to sign up for superfast broadband, following the arrival of the new technology in the town. This comes as part of a national Government campaign to raise awareness of the benefits faster Internet speeds can bring. Locally, the Connecting Shropshire roll-out has brought around 30,000 homes and businesses within reach of the fibre broadband network. However, some people are not aware whether they can get superfast broadband, or that they need to upgrade to a fibre broadband package with their chosen internet service provider. Check the availability of fibre broadband on the Connecting Shropshire website: www.connectingshropshire.co.uk. Go to <http://bit.ly/1Ae5CWk> to read the full story.



Connecting Shropshire Programme Manager, Chris Taylor and Philip Dunne MP meet up with Craig Gardiner-Jones, Openreach engineer

Update on phase 2 procurement

In February 2014, Shropshire Council was allocated £11.38m as part of the Government's commitment to improve broadband nationally and to provide access to superfast speeds for at least 90% of premises in the Shropshire Council area by 2017. The funding was offered to the Council provided it could locate committed match funding £1 for £1.

BDUK have subsequently committed to supporting Shropshire Council with a further procurement up to the value of £11.38m, regardless of the Council's ability to secure the necessary full match funding prior to procurement. The agreement is based on Shropshire Council's commitment to continue to seek match funding through sources including the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Shropshire Council is currently progressing with a phase 2 procurement that is currently out to tender under the existing 'framework contract' arrangements that BDUK have in place. The tender process and contract negotiations should be completed by the summer, although work won't start until the current phase 1 contract is completed at the end of 2016.

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