

UltraFast Broadband UFBB – IMPORTANT: Response needed by 29 January 2021

I wrote to you in December 2020 on behalf of the Parish Meeting to explain a Government scheme to bring UFBB to rural communities like Newton Harcourt and Wistow. (NH&W)

You were invited to attend a Special Parish Meeting (via Zoom) which was held with Leicestershire County Council and OpenReach on Tuesday 19 January, where they gave us more details of the scheme.

Very many people within our community have already been complaining about poor internet speeds and reliability. This will inevitably continue to get worse, just think of all the extra pressure there is on our now old fashioned and bottlenecked internet network. For example:

- Streaming services like NETFLIX, iPlayer, Amazon Prime
- Your SKY and BT sports and entertainment packages
- Working from home, use of Zoom etc
- Smart technology like RING video doorbells, ALEXA type devices, home management systems like NEST
- Home schooling/student remote learning
- Online gym and cycling sessions
- Along with all your usual internet services like YouTube, online gaming

Modern technologies are already being designed and updated around UFBB because it offers more capacity and speed to cope with this increasing demand.

As a Parish Meeting we feel it is imperative not to miss the funding opportunity being provided by the government (currently until March 2021) which is effectively investing in our futures. We think that having UFBB would mean that NH&W will remain an attractive place to buy into and rent in. Without UFBB many people will just look elsewhere. It is important that we future-proof the villages now, while we have a government subsidy on offer, rather than be left behind and possibly have to update at a cost to us personally. More people are working from home because of the Covid pandemic and post pandemic this may continue, creating even higher demands on Broadband. Moving to UFBB will be a bit like moving from the pump drawn water supply of the 1950s to a mains water supply, it is that important.

What needs to happen?	OpenReach estimate that it will cost them around £170,000 to bring the fibre network (which is UFBB) to our villages. They can claim this amount from the government if households and businesses pledge the voucher attached to their household. A voucher is worth £1500 to OpenReach for an individual household and £3500 for a business. (Note this is not your money you are spending, the government hand it over)
How many households need to pledge?	A lot! Based on the costs above, if only individual households pledged we would need around 114 households to do so, almost impossible for us to achieve. BUT if you have a business that is registered from your home address , then please register as a business, as OpenReach can claim more than double for a business. I can't overestimate the importance of you doing this if you can.
What if we don't reach the target?	The funding will go to another community. There is currently no guarantee that similar funding will be available in the future, leaving us in a digital backwater!
I am a tenant.	Contact your landlord and share this information with them. The landlord would need to

What should I do?	pledge for your property and you would need to sign up for an UFBB package at the appropriate time.
When will it happen?	Once we have pledged enough vouchers to make it viable for OpenReach , the work should take place within a year. This will depend on the workload at the time we have reached the target.
What will it cost me.	Once you have pledged you are also agreeing to take out an UFBB package from an internet service provider (does not have to be your current one), once the works are complete. There may be an increase in monthly cost, it depends what you have currently and what you then take out. The following website gives you an idea of current costs (note these change all the time) https://www.ispreview.co.uk/ You will need to take out that package within 2 months of the new network being installed.
My current package is coming to an end in the next 12 months. What should I do?	This is where your own judgement is required. You may wish to leave your package running until we have the new network installed as you may face exit costs to leave your contract to sign up to the new UFBB package.
What do all of us need to do?	Read all the information we have provided to you. If you have any questions, contact Graham Handsley as soon as possible. Once you are comfortable with proceeding, sign up and pledge your voucher. It is really important that if you have a business registered from your home address that you register as a business https://www.openreach.com/connect-my-community Contact me if you need help with this.
How will it get to my house?	OpenReach will use exactly the same method as you have for your current internet supply. For most, if not all of us, that will be via a telegraph pole and an overhead cable into your house. A small box will need to be fitted in your house next to your telephone box.
Let me know	Once you have pledged your voucher online, please let me know (Graham Handsley) and whether you registered as a business or individual household. This is really important for us to monitor how close we are getting to achieving the target amount.
Contact Details	Graham Handsley: ghandsley@gmail.com ; 07964 984 579 For any questions or concerns you have about the scheme.
OpenReach	Openreach and UFBB explanations here https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband
Timelines	Because we feel this is so important for NH&W, if we haven't heard from you within 7 days, one of the UFBB Group will contact you to see if we can help explain the scheme more clearly. This gives us the best chance of hitting the target in time for March.

Graham Handsley, Treasurer, Wistow cum Newton Harcourt Parish Meeting
On behalf of the UltraFast Broadband Working Group
(Graham Handsley, Julie Guiver, Celia Bates, Stuart Kellock, Gina Handsley)
January 2021