

Allpay to close their Broadband service 31st May 2016

Allpay have indicated that they will be closing their Broadband service entirely by 31st May 2016 and will be communicating this to their customers in around two weeks' time. Apparently this is a commercial decision due to falling revenues from the service and the need to upgrade obsolete equipment. There appears to be nothing we can do to persuade them to delay this.

As part of the community fibre scheme, BT Openreach are designing a solution for those on the Hereford exchange in Allensmore parish who expressed a wish to participate. This design should be available in the next 4-6 weeks, and in order to proceed we would then need to obtain the funding and, if successful, then schedule implementation. This will not be in place by the time of the planned demise of the Allpay service.

Having contacted Herefordshire Council and the Fastershire programme, they reiterate that since this area has been designated as commercial deployment for broadband, the Council and the current phase of the Fastershire programme cannot intervene, however they have identified a couple of potentially useful options that may be of interest to you. If you think satellite could be a solution for you, the Fastershire Satellite offer is now taking registrations of interests and a number of premises have received codes to order that service. This is part of a national scheme and provides a subsidy of around £400 for qualifying premises (residential and commercial) that receive less than 2Mbps. This generally covers most or all of the installation cost. For more information see www.fastershire.com/how-to-go-faster/satellite. Secondly, for businesses there is a possibility of a business bursary, for more information see www.fastershire.com/fastershire-your-world/grow-your-business/faster-business

Another possible solution which some in the parish are using, is mobile broadband including the use of a "Mifi" product (A device which can provide a wireless network in your home and communicates with the mobile phone network) – these require an adequate strength mobile phone signal which is not the case everywhere in the parish and are relatively expensive especially for larger volumes of data (but less than satellite). I understand that some success has been achieved with Three and EE networks, and there are perhaps others, too.

We are considering setting up some sort of online forum to enable people to share their knowledge, ideas and experiences.

But some good news too, especially for a few.

BT have completed upgrading cabinet 73 on the A465 near Belmont Abbey. This is likely to be an important part of the solution for the community fibre scheme and it also means that those few who are close enough to the cabinet can apply for fibre enabled broadband now. Having used the line speed checker below, I believe that houses as far away from that cabinet as the Webtree area can get high speed broadband while those further along the A465 towards Goosepool area may get at least some service but at a lower speed. It also appears that houses towards the north end of Church Road can get some service also. To check your line, use one of the broadband service providers' line speed check, such as BT's <http://www.productsandservices.bt.com/products/speed-checker>

I'll keep you informed of further developments including a date for a public meeting when BT Openreach will present their proposals for a community fibre solution.

This topic will also be on the agenda at the next Allensmore parish council meeting on 24th March. The agenda will be posted soon on www.Allensmore.org.uk.

Tony
Allensmore Parish Council
4th March 2016