

Key points from meeting 16th Feb 2017, Pateshall Hall, Allensmore

Next phase of Fastershire is underway which aims to provide superfast broadband in the gaps left by the previous phase. We will know by early April if we are included. We therefore need to wait until we know that decision before proceeding with a community fibre solution.

The Community Fibre solution will cost £30,289 and will provide fibre to the premises (330mbps speed) to properties in Church Rd, Green Farm lane and some on the main road around the Village Hall. A list was provided but a number of questions have been raised and once clarified, the list will be included here.

The current proposal provides for connection points on the A465 for the remote properties further down from the village hall. The request was re-iterated to BT to provide an indicative cost for connecting these 4 properties using trenches dug by the landowners.

Funds will need to be raised by voluntary contributions from residents, plus any grants we can get, though rules on state aid do limit the possibilities here.

BDUK vouchers can be pledged, though current rules require these to be redeemed by end March 2018 but not until the project has been implemented. BT require 12 months from contract signature to complete the work, so this is a very real problem unless the March 2018 deadline is extended and must be before the contract can be signed – if we wish to use the vouchers.

Around 60 – 70% of the people present supported the idea of proceeding with the Community Fibre option in the event that Fastershire does not deliver for us.

Plans:

A group of interested people will meet in the next 2 weeks to develop ideas for raising funds for the community fibre in the event that Fastershire doesn't provide for us.

These will include communicating and coordinating the use of BDUK vouchers (is a bulk application possible?), should the more remote properties down the A465 be included in the core project and/or are there other ways to include these, ideas for suggesting levels of pledges and possibly different levels for business and residential properties, how to communicate and promote the scheme.

I will continue to chase BT for a clarification of the properties included and costs for connecting the more distant properties down the A465.

Semi-related matter:

BT confirmed that the new cabinet in Cobhall is fully functional but problem with their systems are preventing people from purchasing services from it. BT continue to work to resolve the problem and are hopeful it will be sorted in 7 – 10 days.