

Bi-monthly Update

A roundup of what has been going on in the programme during July and August.

List of live cabinets

There is now a handy list on the Connecting Shropshire website of all of the fibre-enabled cabinets provided by the programme so far! If you don't know which cabinet serves you, then there is a link at the top of the page to help you find out. Simply put your postcode and house number in and it will tell you which exchange area and cabinet you are served by. To view the page, go to <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/live-cabinets/>



Openreach engineer Danielle Baugh working in Much Wenlock as part of the Connecting Shropshire programme.

Three cabinets in the Much Wenlock exchange area are now live.

One million homes and businesses all “fired up”

Early August saw the government's rollout of superfast broadband reach more than 1 million homes and businesses across the country. The UK-wide rollout is a key part of the government's long-term economic plan to secure Britain's future by providing access to superfast broadband in areas the private sector would not otherwise have reached. The current rural programme is expected to deliver returns of £20 for every £1 invested, representing “tremendous value for money”. For the full story, go to www.gov.uk/government/news/superfast-broadband-reaches-1-million-more-homes-and-businesses

Women and Broadband

Shropshire Council has been awarded £75,000 after Connecting Shropshire made a successful bid for funding to Broadband Delivery UK and the Government Equalities Office.

The grant is for the running of a Women and Broadband project in the Shropshire Council area until March 2015 and will cover all the costs of the project. Women in Rural Enterprise (WiRE), based at Harper Adams University, has been appointed to run the project. Tina Woodward, Shropshire Council Deputy Cabinet member for broadband, said:

"I am pleased that the bid has been successful as the project aims to enable and to assist women to take advantage of the faster broadband networks we are building to grow and improve their business or even start-up a new business. We have great partners to deliver the service with experience in the field. WiRE is performing a similar role in Staffordshire and we'll be working with them where practical to gain economies of scale."

WiRE will deliver a series of events around the county where women will be supported up to and beyond the end of the project by peer mentors appointed from WiRE's existing network. For more details go to www.wirechallenge.org/

Optimising Business Broadband (OBB) update

Connecting Shropshire is working with Staffordshire County Council to provide a series of free events and business support to help ensure that small and medium-sized enterprises take advantage of the new fibre optic broadband infrastructure that is being rolled out in the Councils' areas. The project offers local businesses a unique opportunity to benefit from free expert advice funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

To find out if there's an event near you and to book a place, go to www.optimisingbusinessbroadband.co.uk/events

Pontesbury Broadplace

The roll-out of fibre-based broadband across Shropshire passed another milestone in August, as the final cabinet in the Pontesbury exchange area was connected to the new faster fibre optic network. Around 1,900 homes and businesses in areas including Pontesbury, Minsterley and Snailbeach now have access to fibre broadband.

Tudor Bebb, Shropshire Councillor for Minsterley, said:

"We've waited a long time for fibre optic broadband to reach Minsterley and Pontesbury and now that it's arrived, I'd encourage families and businesses to take full advantage by upgrading to a fibre broadband package with their chosen internet service provider."

Roger Evans and Heather Kidd, Shropshire Councillors for Longden and Chirbury & Worthen, said:

"We're pleased that fibre broadband is now available to the cabinets serving premises in Plealey and Snailbeach and look forward to better broadband being available to more of our constituents as the Connecting Shropshire programme continues to roll-out across the county."

The [Pontesbury Broadplace](#) is already connected to fibre and provides help to new and experienced computer and tablet users, particularly those unfamiliar with the internet, to get going. We asked Robert Pither, the Broadplace Co-ordinator, why people in the area should consider upgrading to fibre broadband, and he said:


"The most obvious benefit for domestic users is for those whose existing connection is either too slow or the download speed not reliable enough to stream videos and TV broadcasts. A very close second is where there are two or more users online at the same time, faster broadband will mean that they won't compete for bandwidth."

"For commercial users doing any collaborative work involving the exchange of multiple documents through any of the Cloud storage systems, superfast broadband is fantastic. Also filling in complex online forms would take up much less time, for example; for farmers to comply with DEFRA requirements."

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