

Fringford Parish Council

Important News - Future-proofed Ultra-Speed Fibre Optic Broadband to your House

The village has a great opportunity to upgrade its Broadband infrastructure to the latest ultra-fast fibre service direct to all households in the village. This will revolutionise connection speeds and reliability.

The Parish Council has been liaising with Oxfordshire County Council and Openreach on the proposed roll-out of the Government Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) "Gigabit Voucher Scheme." This scheme is designed to bring ultra-fast (FTTP) broadband to rural communities and OCC has secured a £1million grant to support local communities like ours.

This should enable **those of us who sign-up** to get ultra-fast fibre optic cable installed all the way to our houses. (As you may know Fringford currently has much slower copper cable from the cabinet near the school to each house giving speeds between 15 and 80Mb/s depending on how far away you are). With the proposed ultra-fast fibre connection speeds of up to 1000Mb/s will be possible! In addition to the vastly increased speed a full fibre service will also significantly improve reliability, ending those very annoying short-term service dropouts. With the much higher capacity FTTP there is no speed drop-off at peak times or at distance from the cabinet, so we will all benefit from the speed we pay for.

The Parish Council has progressed this to the point where the next step is for us to get a **minimum of 55 households** to commit to converting to an upgraded, faster **FTTP service**, usually with their current provider. Should we reach or exceed this target and then win final approval for our scheme from **DCMS, OCC**, using government grants, then pays **Openreach** to install all the cabling at the huge cost of almost £300,000 for Fringford. Each household/business is entitled to a **Gigabit Voucher** to benefit from the funding. **To activate this, we each need to go online to claim and pledge our 'virtual voucher' to Openreach. This is all done online in one transaction where you enter your postcode, confirm you currently have less than 100Mb/s speed and complete your name and address. It takes about 4 minutes.**

Whilst it may be possible for individual households to upgrade to the full fibre system at a later date there is currently no guarantee that this will be feasible or, if it was, that it would still be free of installation costs.

Those who sign-up will be required to commit to upgrade to a FTTP service for at least 12 months from when the new cabling is in place. If you currently have a service delivering less than 30Mb/s then you will need to upgrade to 30Mb/s or more. If your current service exceeds 30 Mb/s then you will need to commit to a service that doubles the speed. Currently Fibre deals start at £22.50 with PlusNet for 36Mb/s, Talk-Talk at £24.00 for 67Mb/s, BT Essential at £26.99 for 50Mb/s and BT at £39.99 for 150Mb/s. (Data from U switch on 16/02/2021) The market is very competitive and fast changing. Compare these prices to what you are paying, you might find that it will cost little more for Fibre than you are paying today and possibly even less. It depends on the provider, contract length and any extras you choose.

With the ongoing development of homeworking, home learning, streaming services for sport, television and music we think this is an excellent opportunity for Fringford to get ahead of the curve and benefit from these generous grants. Internet speed is also increasingly significant in the housing market.

The funding of the grants is limited so we need to act quickly to secure our share, the deadline for registration is Friday, 5th March.

The next steps for you are:

- **To pledge your Gigabit Voucher go to...** <https://www.openreach.com/connectmycommunity>

Please tick the box You have less than 100Mb/s service at present

Please tick the box Your postcode has been identified as being eligible for a further local body top up. Please tick this box if you would like to us to apply for the additional funding to pledge more to this project.

- **And (if you wouldn't mind!), to be kept up to date on progress and help us manage the project locally, please email fringfordparishcouncil@gmail.com to confirm your participation.**