

Update from Connecting Shropshire for Shifnal and Sheriffhales LJC

Connecting Shropshire is a £26m programme to bring fibre broadband to the more rural parts of the Shropshire Council area, where private companies are not going to provide it as part of their commercial plans. The programme has already started to provide people with access to fibre broadband with download speeds of up to 80mbps, about 10x faster than the average for the county as a whole. More than 23,000 homes and businesses across a range of exchange areas, from Albrighton to Alberbury and St Martins to Clungunford, are now within reach of the new fibre broadband network that we're building.

It's a huge engineering challenge and we can't do everywhere at the same time, as we have to build the network out from existing points of presence. In total, we expect to put in around about 13,000kms of the new fibre optic cable, with completion due in 2016.

The parishes in the LJC are mainly covered by the Shifnal exchange area, which has been partially upgraded to fibre broadband by Connecting Shropshire. Most of the work to upgrade the roadside cabinets in the exchange area has been done so over 900 premises in the LJC are now within reach of the new fibre optic network. There is still work ongoing to connect two remaining cabinets; one located in Sheriffhales and the other to the south of Shifnal (near the junction of Park Street and Park Lane). The work to upgrade these cabinets should be completed soon, with fibre broadband being available by the end of March 2015.

Also not all premises in an exchange area will get access to fibre based broadband and not all premises served by a fibre enabled cabinet will necessarily get a speed enhancement. Not all cabinets in an exchange area will necessarily be fibre enabled.

To connect to fibre broadband, people will need to contact their chosen internet service provider to upgrade their broadband package, the broadband speeds won't increase automatically.



Openreach engineer Dave Bant working on a fibre cabinet

Visit our website: <http://connectingshropshire.co.uk/when-and-where/> to check which exchange area and cabinet serves your premises and to check availability of fibre broadband. Also on the website, there is lots of information including FAQs and why faster fibre broadband is important for homes and businesses.

Any assistance that you can provide in spreading the word to your contacts about the availability of this fibre broadband network would be fantastic. The more people that switch to the new network, the more likely that we'll have more resources to provide fibre broadband to more parts of the Council area. On request, Connecting Shropshire staff can provide posters and flyers as well as attending local events and other assistance.

If any Parish would like a member of the Connecting Shropshire team to attend a Parish Council meeting to provide a more detailed update, please let us know on connecting.shropshire@shropshire.gov.uk