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Update from Connecting Shropshire

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 (via Fibre To The Cabinet or FTTC), about 10x faster than the average for the county as a whole. More than 30,000 homes and businesses across a range of exchange areas, from Albrighton to Alberbury and St Martins to Cleobury Mortimer, 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 at the end of 2016.

The first of the exchange areas in the LJC area to go live was Cleobury Mortimer (back in October) where fibre broadband is now available to about 1,200 premises in and around Cleobury Mortimer. Other parts of the LJC area are served by the following exchange areas: Burwarton, Clee Hill, Highley, Kinlet, Stoke St Milborough, Stottesdon and Tenbury Wells.

As requested here is a more in-depth view for the Coreley, Milson, Neen Savage, Neen Sollars and Wheathill Parish Council areas:

Coreley All premises in the parish are served by cabinets 3, 5, or 6 in the Clee Hill exchange. These cabinets are expected to be fibre-enabled this spring.

Milson Most premises in the parish are connected to Cleobury Mortimer cabinet 5. Premises served by this cabinet are currently expected to be provided with a Fibre To The Premises (FTTP) solution, with download speeds of up to 300mbps achievable. Planning for this is still underway and availability is unlikely to start until spring 2016, due to the volume and complexity of the work involved in providing FTTP.

Neen Savage Some premises are connected to cabinets 3 & 4 in the Cleobury Mortimer exchange area, which are already providing a fibre broadband service, so these parishioners can order an upgrade to fibre broadband from their chosen internet service provider (ISP). However, most of the premises are connected to cabinet 2, which is the same as Cleobury Mortimer cabinet 5: currently they're expected to be provided with a Fibre To The Premises (FTTP) solution, with download speeds of up to 300mbps achievable. Planning for this is still underway and availability is unlikely to start until spring 2016, due to the volume and complexity of the work involved in providing FTTP.

Neen Sollars Most premises in the parish are connected to Cleobury Mortimer cabinet 5. Premises served by this cabinet are currently expected to be provided with a Fibre To The Premises (FTTP) solution, with download speeds of up to 300mbps achievable. Planning for this is still underway and availability is unlikely to start until spring 2016, due to the volume and complexity of the work involved in providing FTTP.

Wheathill Most of the premises in the parish are connected to cabinet 1 in the Stoke St Milborough exchange area. This cabinet is not currently planned to be fibre-enabled.

Please note that not every premise connected to a fibre cabinet will necessarily be able to upgrade to a fibre broadband package. However, Connecting Shropshire has a commitment to provide all premises in the programme area with access to at least 2mbps by the end of 2016 (where current connection speeds are less than 2mbps).

In addition, Connecting Shropshire is tendering for an extension to the current programme (phase 1), which would mean that we'd be able to provide faster broadband speeds to more homes and businesses. At this early stage, it's important to stress that we cannot give assurances that any premises in the LJC would benefit from a phase 2 and, even if they did, the work is not due to start until 2017.

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.

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.

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