**KEMPLEY VILLAGE SUPERFAST BROADBAND**

**REPORT ON PROGRESS TO DATE**

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1. **Current Position**

**HOUSE OF COMMONS ENVIRONMENT FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**

**Rural Broadband and digital services 7th Report 2014 -15**

**There is a risk of poor rural broadband availability causing harm to farm businesses and the rural economy. It is essential that those who are ‘hardest-to-reach’ are given priority.**

**Fibre to the Cabinet Services (FTTC)**

The majority of village internet users in Kempley are still using the “OpenReach” telecommunications company copper cables to connect to upgraded fibre optic systems at the nearest Openreach telecommunications cabinets. Depending on your position in the village cabinets are located at Dymock, Gorsley, Much Marcle and Upton Bishop. **Fastershires** delivered improvements to these cabinets as part of the Phase 1 and 2 role out of superfast broadband across these two counties. This upgrade is known as Fibre to the cabinet or FTTC. FTTC does not deliver significant benefits to areas like Kempley that are remote from these cabinets.

Copper wires have two main disadvantages for broadband delivery: the longer the copper wire between the street cabinet and the premise, the slower the speed received; and increased usage can significantly reduce the speed delivered to individual premises. Recurring problems include poor speed at peak times and broadband ‘dropping in and out’, meaning that the connection sometimes fails completely. In addition minimum broadband speeds are akin to fuel consumption in a car: “you rarely find that you can actually achieve it”. Download speeds in Kempley for users on the copper wire system are often below 1Mbps and effectively prevent effective use of Internet based services.

**Wireless Broadband Upgrade for business interests in Kempley**

In recognition of these problems of what has become know as CRAP (Copper Rust and Poor Service) Broadband in Kempley efforts were made to find a way to deliver improved internet services to the village in 2014. The Broadband team were able to take advantage of a Government Voucher Scheme for Small and Medium Sized Businesses (SMEs). The Broadband team in Kempley established the village of Kempley as a Business Cluster, and convinced the Government to extend the voucher scheme to the village in partnership with the City of Gloucester and the Forest of Dean District Council. We were one of the few areas in Gloucestershire and the Forest of Dean able to benefit from these changes. As a consequence over £50,000 worth of investment was put in place to bring wireless broadband to Kempley in January 2016 to benefit 14 businesses. Wireless receivers were installed on Chiblers Hill that provide superfast broadband to premises with a line of sight to the transmitter and a wireless receiver on each property able to take part. The new service is capable of reaching download speeds of up to 30Mbps but more typically 10-20 Mbps. The service still drops out from time to time but after an initial commissioning phase has improved in reliability. In addition to business users a few residential properties have also connected to the new service but a role out to the main residential areas has not proved possible. Airband who provide the service, also provided free internet connection to the village hall.

**Mobile Phone Internet Services – 4Gplus**

A number of villagers have been able to take advantage of improvements to internet download speeds through improvements to mobile phone down load internet speeds. Coverage in the village of Kempley for 4G services is patchy but improving. 4G plus allows internet download speeds capped out at 60Mbps, with typical download speeds of 24-30 Mbps. Exact download speeds and reliability of service will depend on where you are located in the village. Within Kempley Green about 50% of properties are shown on coverage maps of being capable of receiving the service. The cost of the service is broadly the same as the Airband Wireless dedicated service. It provides another option for villagers interested in securing superfast broadband but care is needed to confirm that the service will actual deliver.

1. **Future Improvements**

Fastershires (the joint County Council Scheme between Gloucestershire and Herefordshire to deliver superfast broadband) have put in place a new plan to deliver superfast broadband to the remaining areas of the Counties still suffering poor broadband speeds. Know as Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) it will bring fibre optic cables to the majority of properties in Kempley. The scheme being implemented by GIGACLEAR is currently being rolled out to various communities in the two counties. GIGACLEAR will bring fibre optic cables to a box in the highway outside most properties in Kempley. At that point service providers will be able to offer various service packages to individual properties that will include connecting the property to the fibre optic telecommunication systems. Fibre optic systems will deliver download speeds generally capped at 100 Mbps, over a 100 times faster than systems delivered via the Openreach copper cable systems. The new system will operate independently from the Openreach telecommunications systems and new telecommunication cabinets will be installed for Kempley. The rollout programme has now reached **Upleadon**, **including Highleadon, Malswick, Newent, Redmarley, Tibberton and Upleadon** and the next phase will include **Pool Hill, including Ketford, Poolhill, Redmarley and Ryton**

Two phases of the programme will impact the Parish as follows:

* **Greenway Cabinet** – this covers **Broomsgreen, Dinnington, Eastnor, Greewnay, Leddington, Parkway, Preston Cross and Tillers Green** - this will deliver superfast broadband to the extreme northern end of the Parish. Two properties in Kempley (Oak Cottages – now named Stonehouse Cottages) are currently planned to be connected to this cabinet. This connection is expected to be made in the next six months;
* **Kempley Cabinet** – this covers **Castle Tump, Four Oaks, Hillend, Kempley, Lyne Down, Much Marcle, Old Gore, Oxenhall, Perrystone Hill, Upton Bishop and Yatton.** This will deliver superfast broadband in Kempley to all but about 14 properties (located north of the Kempley sewage works). This connection is expected to be installed in the next 12-18 months, though we are still waiting for final confirmation on the installation date and discussion with GIGACLEAR and FASTERSHIREs on the detail of this work. Community meeting are expected to be planned fourth quarter 2019 when full details will be explained.

1. **Kempley Combined Solution (KCS)**

About 14 properties are currently excluded from the latest improvements to deliver superfast broadband to Kempley. They include properties north of the Kempley Sewage Works (but excluding Saycells and Oak Cottages (currently named Stonehouse cottages on the B4024).

In discussions with Fastershires application has been made to the **Marches & Gloucestershire Business Broadband Grant Scheme** for funding to put in place the Kempley Combined Solution, designed to connect four businesses (two in Herefordshire and two in Gloucestershire) to the superfast broadband network. If successful this will allow a maximum of up to £100,000 further investment to deliver superfast broadband to the northern area of Kempley. As a combined solution it will allow all the remaining properties in Kempley to receive a superfast broadband connection. Depending on the successful technology deployed it will then be for the respective farms and residential properties to decide if they want to make the final connection. This will complete access for all properties in Kempley to the superfast broadband network.

The first phase of this application, which straddles the County Boundary has been accepted by Fastershires and the second phase inviting estimates from suppliers has commenced. To meet the terms of the grant this work will need to be completed by November 2019.

1. **Summary**

Kempley is on course to complete the roll out of superfast broadband to the roadside boundary of all properties in the Parish by 2021. Exactly when connections are completed will depend where your property is located in Kempley and what decisions parishioners take in respect of the final service connections. It will complete one of the main recommendations outlined in the village plan and illustrates how a pro-active village can secure improvements to basic services.

**Martin Brocklehurst**

**Kempley Broadband Group**