

1. SUPERFAST ESSEX - BROADBAND MEETING 25.07.2017

Glen Dryhurst attended for Ashingdon Parish

There was a presentation by : **COUNTY BROADBAND**
01376 562002 www.countybroadband.co.uk

They are a not for profit company started with the encouragement and help of Essex County Council and the CofE Chelmsford Diocese covering all of historic Essex including ex Essex London boroughs and parts of Cambs, Herts and Suffolk.

They are one of the first such operators in the UK and they are the farthest ahead in coverage and take-up. Which is what you would expect in Essex - in the birthplace of Radio and where Marconi did his world beating work in radio telecommunications.

They operate by use of radio transmission only, so no copper cables, no fibre-optic cables, no digging trenches, no connecting to houses. Once an area network is started, they establish a main transmission point, e.g. a church steeple, hilltop, mobile phone tower, etc. then transmit to small antennas mounted on each subscriber's house, office or works.

They can get speeds up to 1000 Mb/sec and typical user speed is 32 Mb/sec, the same speed for upload and for download and because it is radio, it can be the same speeds with both transmitting simultaneously.

Rates vary from £9.99 to £34.99 per month depending on what service and speed you choose. Free phone UK calls, any time, any duration costs £6.00 per month extra.

Once connected there is no need for a phone land-line, so that can be cancelled, saving £18.99 per month.

Their area of coverage is throughout most of central, northeast and northwest Essex down to the Dengie around Maldon, Chelmsford, Brentwood, Epping. They have not extended south of the Crouch because there has been no or little demand from those districts and parishes, except some requests in Benfleet / Castle Point. Once there is demand for expansion, they will cover those additional areas and they have promised to come to visit, survey and talk to councils and local people in those new areas.

If the demand and then the commitment to take up reaches a certain level they will come in and expand the local networks as more villages or more subscribers sign up.

2. ESSEX SUPERFAST

This is the Essex County Council body which is charged with making Essex a 100% coverage for fast Broadband whether by cable, fibre or radio.

Most of the County, 85% is covered either by 2 plus providers or by a single provider.

Another 11% is in progress or is planned for the near future,

Leaving only 4% not yet covered and not yet planned.

Already Essex Superfast have reached far higher levels of high speed broadband coverage than any other county in the UK, and they expect to reach full coverage by the early 2020s, but that is only what you would expect from Essex - and the birthplace of radio.

There have been very levels of connection and high take up. The take up target to make a scheme viable is 43%, but customer take up levels have been much higher. Above 43% the

providers are obliged to make investment increases elsewhere in Essex to compensate for subsidies received.

Essex Superfast provides the low cost Community WiFi Scheme service for many of the village halls throughout the county.

Essex Superfast has a website mapping that show live the current level of coverage and the planned levels.

Those maps are in high detail and show the precise location and shape of every single property with a dot marker which will show :

BLACK DOT - Fast available from 2 or more providers,
GREY DOT - Fast broadband available for 1 only provider,
YELLOW DOT - Fast broadband in progress or planned for coverage soon,
WHITE DOT - Fast broadband not in place and not yet planned.

Each community needs to check the maps to discover :

- Where the services are covered, planned or not planned,
- To check with local residents whether the details are correct,
- To contact and inform Essex Superfast of all discrepancies,
- To ask for a survey and report on possibilities & timescales for a solution,
- To request a visit to their village / council
- To inform Essex Superfast of the arrival of any new service providers in their area.

Without high speed broadband, some residents are on as little as 2MB/sec which 10 years ago used to be considered good but is now quite slow. And, 20 years ago, Dial-up speed of 56Kb/sec which is 0.056Mb/sec is being encountered in few places/homes. There are a few people still on such low speeds either because they are in the wrong, remote area and because they will not sign up for Broadband.

It was made plain by Essex Superfast and by all of the service providers that each parish, village, community needs a "Broadband Champion" as a contact and to pursue coverage, expansion, service levels and maintenance.

CONSULTATION

There is a consultation starting on 31 July 2017, but we understand that the final date is short, before councils get back from the summer recess. They ask that all councils, areas, communities try to respond.

CONTACT SUPPERFAST

Every Parish is urged to make contact with Superfast and to keep a regular contact and dialogue going for their remote and unserved / unplanned areas, because eventually they will help to provide solutions for everywhere. Even the service providers BT/Openreach, Gigaclear, County Broadband and those not there Virgin, etc have promised to assess and find solutions for all areas.

Web: www.superfastessex.org

Email: make.theconnection@essex.gov.uk

WE NEED TO CONTACT THEM AND KEEP UP A REGULAR LOBBYING FOR OUR UNCONNECTED/UNPLANNED REMOTE AREAS : SOUTH FAMBRIDGE, LOWER ROAD, ASHINGTON PARK ESTATE, CANEWDON ROAD, HYDE WOOD LANE.

3. - BROADBAND - BT / OPENREACH

BT / OpenReach were at the Essex Superfast meeting and showed how far they have gone and they told us what they planned to increase coverage of high speed fibre and in some cases by new high conductivity copper wires, nearly as good as fibre, to replace old, poor quality copper and aluminium cables.

Much of the county is being dug up to lay in new mainly fibre cables and fibre local green boxes.

Fibre is not affected by distance from the exchange and new copper is very little affected.

They have already been making a significant step further than anyone else that is : FTTP – Fibre to the Premises. This is where the fibre does not only go to the local box on the corner, but fibre then continues along the street and at each property, there is a small junction which will take a branch fibre directly into the house or office. It is early days, but this will expand as take up increases and it becomes popular and in demand.

In the meantime more cables are being laid out to remote areas. Remote villages will be covered unless their competitors have already done it. And the last stage will be lines stretching to the remotest solitary house and businesses. Even if a competitor has done the last mile, BT clients can still remain with them, and vice versa.

Right now BT are expanding by Phase 3 which includes expanded fibre high speed services in : Rochford District, Maldon District, Castle Point Borough, Basildon Borough.

They spoke about the Community Fibre Partnerships.

www.communityfibre.bt.com

Community Fibre Partnerships

www.communityfibre.bt.com

Delivering fibre to the hardest to reach communities.

They confirmed that they are happy to talk with any community, parish council or other groups about coverage, progress and plans.

4. - BROADBAND - GIGACLEAR

Gigaclear were at the Essex Superfast meeting and showed how far they have gone and they told us what they planned to increase coverage of high speed fibre in Essex.

Parts of the county which have not been done by BT/Openreach, Virgin or others is being dug up by them to lay in new fibre cables and installing new fibre local boxes.

Fibre is not affected by distance from the exchange.

They have also been making or planning some steps further than most others, that is FTTP – Fibre to the premises. This is where the fibre does not only go to the local box on the corner with copper wires to the houses, but instead, fibre then continues along the street and at each property, there is a small junction which will take a branch fibre directly into the house or office. It is early days, but Gigaclear will expand this as take up increases and it becomes popular and in demand.

In the meantime more cables are being laid out mostly to remote areas. Some remote villages may be covered by them unless their competitors have already done it or are planning it. The last stage will be lines stretching to the remotest solitary houses and businesses. Even if a competitor has done the last mile, Gigaclear clients can still join them, remain with them, and vice versa. For the remotest they can use other services including radio broadband where networks exist or can be connected.

Right now Gigaclear are expanding mainly in rural areas which includes expanded fibre high speed services in villages and hamlets throughout Essex.

They spoke about their website, their coverage, their planned expansion and this this can be done by using their website Postcode Checker which may be useful for our uncovered / unplanned areas.

www.gigaclear.com

They confirmed that they are happy to talk with any community, parish council or other groups about coverage, progress and plans.