



GIGABIT BROADBAND VOUCHER SCHEME

East Hagbourne Community Fibre Partnership

East Hagbourne • Didcot • Oxfordshire • OX11
Contact: Cordelia Gover

A team effort nets gigabit results

A community in Oxfordshire has signed up for the fastest broadband speeds available and it isn't costing them anything thanks to the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme and special funding for schools through Openreach.

Ninety two properties in East Hagbourne near Didcot are looking forward to receiving gigabit capable (where one gigabit is equal to 1,000 megabits) broadband speeds through a full fibre connection installed by the Community Fibre Partnership Scheme from Openreach.

As a Parish Councillor – and responsible for maintaining the village website - Cordelia Gover quickly realised that at her end of East Hagbourne, broadband speeds were much slower (less than 24 megabits per second) than at the other end of the village. When she received information from Oxfordshire County Council about schemes to improve broadband speeds in the area she quickly galvanised four other local residents for a community-led scheme to apply for superfast or ultrafast speeds. What she ended up with surpassed all her expectations.

Working with the Community Fibre Partnership scheme from Openreach they realised that to install fibre to the premises at Cordelia's end of the village, fibre cabling would be laid past the village school, Hagbourne CE Primary School. This meant that Openreach could draw on its own community grant scheme available to educational establishments where they would pay 75% of the installation cost of new fibre infrastructure, capped to a maximum of £30,000. It also meant passing a further eighty-seven properties on the way to Cordelia's project.

The whole scheme was calculated with a final cost to the community of £6,000. However, with two businesses forming part of the ninety-two premises, they were able to apply for two Gigabit Vouchers to cover the remaining cost.



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Happily this meant that the whole scheme for ninety-two properties would be completed at no cost to any of East Hagbourne's residents.

Cordelia said: "At the start of this project I didn't think it was fair that we should be penalised for living at the furthest end of a copper wire connection and that's what spurred me on. After making contact with Craig Bower at Oxfordshire County Council he was able to point me in the right direction for community schemes and the government-backed Gigabit Voucher Scheme."

Charles Stutley is one of the businesses operating in East Hagbourne who applied for the Gigabit Voucher. He runs a business that monitors rainfall and potential droughts across the horn of Africa through satellite technology and is able to alert nomadic tribes, via mobile phone connectivity, about areas of drought risk so they can avoid them.

Charles is thrilled that he has been able to contribute towards the scheme through his business use of the

voucher and said: "This is wonderful news that the gigabit vouchers and Openreach grant to the school have been accepted. It will make a huge difference to all of our lives at this end of the village and I'm thrilled that we can project East Hagbourne into the 22nd Century. We will all be very grateful to Openreach to be able to communicate properly with the outside world either for pleasure or for business."

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