



GIGABIT BROADBAND VOUCHER SCHEME

Sun Salads Limited

Holwell • Cranborne • Dorset • BH21 5QS
Contact: Simon Lawes

Basking in the gigabit glow

Sun Salads is a family business based near Holwell near Cranborne in Dorset that grows, packages and supplies watercress for retail, wholesale and processing. They supply watercress all year round from four farm locations in southern England and a winter farm in Spain.

Broadband access has been a problem for the business for many years – with an old copper wire connection at least a mile and a half away from the nearest exchange in the village, they only ever enjoyed around 25 megabits per second (Mbps).

With the business based across five locations and some staff working remotely, everyone relies on a shared drive to access company information. As the business has grown in recent years to supply supermarkets and the food service sector they have had to keep up with numerous customer ordering systems – all done online, and with downloads often running overnight.

Business owner Simon Lawes commented: "Sometimes in the afternoons, the broadband connections speeds were so low it became unworkable."

Talking to local supplier, Wessex Internet, when the gigabit voucher scheme was announced in March 2018, Simon was keen to apply for the voucher to offset the cost of a full fibre connection to the business. Installed a few weeks later the improvement has already been dramatic.

Simon added: "We now enjoy reliable download speeds of up to 100 Mbps and are basking in the glow of a much faster broadband connection. Orders from customers open instantly in a click and our multi-site operation has easy access to our shared information. We are an agricultural business so we're not heavy media users but we are very dependent upon keeping up with our customers – and the option to upgrade to faster speeds if, and when we need it are vital for a growing business."

Not only will Sun Salads benefit from the installation: Simon's home is nearby so, along with his neighbour, they are both applying for residential vouchers of £500

each to take advantage of the passing fibre. Wessex Internet aim to connect up to five other businesses further along the cable as well. Alice Evans of Wessex Internet said: "The news of Sun Salad's upgrade means that other businesses and residents nearby have been encouraged to apply for vouchers and link up as well bringing true gigabit broadband speeds to this remote Dorset area."



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