

Llanfihangel Aberbythych Community Fibre-Optic Broadband Upgrade Initiative

Dear Resident,

You may have seen previous communications on this broadband upgrade initiative. ***Thank you very much to those who have registered already and there is no need to do so again.***

Para-phrasing John F Kennedy "*Ask not what your community can do for you – ask what you can do for your community*." This is a key message that came from a community meeting held in Carmel Village Hall. More community meetings can be arranged if residents decide it appropriate.



We would like to stress what an important community-based scheme this is and how much we hope you will feel able to register your interest, to help us ensure those living or working in this area have access to broadband internet that matches the best in Wales and the UK.

We are asking all properties / businesses in the Llanfihangel Aberbythych Community Council (LACC) area, even if you are satisfied with your current broadband provision, to register an expression of interest, so that you and others in your community who are not so fortunate can have better broadband connectivity. To make the scheme viable, a minimum of approximately 30% of the households / businesses in LACC area need to register their interest. We have had a good response so far but need more to reach the 30% threshold, so the next phase can start.

The more people who register the greater the case for making this happen and the greater the amount of money from the UK Government that is available. The UK Government 'Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme' is offering £1,500 per domestic residence and £3,000 per business property. Read information on the scheme at https://www.broadwaybroadband.co.uk/rural-gigabit-voucher-scheme/.

There is no commitment to anything at this stage.

"*In February 2021, the UK Government released the results of a survey which found that an increase in broadband speed could boost the value of a home by as much as £3,500.*"[1]

[1] https://mobile-magazine.com/wireless-networks/high-speed-broadbands-impact-uk-house-prices-grows

Broadway Broadband, who we have been in discussions with for many months, have committed to connect any residence / business at no cost as long as they are voucher eligible and have registered before the roll-out of the physical infrastructure.

It will be possible to be connected to the new network at some point after it has been installed, but this could incur installation costs which could be significant. Registering your interest to join the scheme now removes any installation costs for eligible properties as they are met by government grants.

Fibre-optic cable to your property / business will allow download speeds of up to 1,000Mbps (minimum of 30Mbps upload) with prices starting from £19.99 per month. During the previously mentioned meeting in Carmel Village Hall, it was rightly pointed out that it is not about headline download / upload speeds; it is what these speeds can enable you and your family / business to do or be ready for future ways of 'communicating'. Upload speed is important for video calls with family & friends and for online business meetings. Download speed is important if multiple people at a residence are streaming multiple audio (Spotify) and / or video (Netflix, Disney, catch-up TV). See Addendum for bullet point list of topics raised and concerns.



This letter has been sent to you by several members of your community who have got together in an attempt to improve broadband in the LACC area.

If you would like to know more and / or have questions, then get in touch with one of the scheme co-ordinators.

Scheme Co-ordinators

Eifion Hopkins (cwmbasset@googlemail.com)

Huw Pearce (huw@ffenestri.co.uk)

Mike Smith (camlais@live.co.uk)

Addendum

Points from meeting at Carmel Village Hall on Tuesday 5th July 2022.

- Appeal to community for support / responsibility.
- Interestingly, arguments for the importance of gigabit connections for all were pretty much the same as those we used in 2009-10 when getting wireless based connectivity for more rural locations off the ground.
- Hope Broadway comes up with some professional blurb we can go round with to get more signatures. Might be worth producing something in case they don't. Put things like the following on a flyer:
    - "Brand" the group to make it sound more official.
    - "Don't miss out on the chance of a government broadband grant of £1500 per household!"
    - Reference the positive nature of the Carmel meeting.
    - Emphasise "We need your support for community broadband in our area."
    - We have a reliable committed supplier.
    - Government subvention will not last forever so we need to get above 30% asap to safeguard access to £1500 (?) per household to help build our network.
    - Please consider registering to help others, even if you are currently happy with your internet service.
    - Because of the way the grant works, expressing interest commits you to nothing but will enable others who currently have poor service to improve theirs.
    - Registering now will help safeguard your chance to join later if/when the new system has proved itself to be better than your current arrangement.
- Change marketing message from tech based, *i.e* speed up & down, to one about benefits from these speeds and fibre-optic connection.
- Fibre connection is future proof for many years perhaps decades.
- Education (primary to university)
    - on-line support / tutoring
    - online research
    - retrieval teacher assignments
    - upload completed assignments
    - online training for enhancing skills / knowledge in changing workplace
- Healthcare / telemedicine
    - online consults coming
    - health monitoring
    - repeat prescriptions
    - monitoring vulnerable people in their own home (less physical care presence coming)
- Shopping on-line
- Communication (video requires greater upload speed)
    - Family (FaceTime™®, WhatsApp™®, Netflix™®, Spotify™®)
    - Friends (FaceTime™®, WhatsApp™®, Netflix™®, Spotify™®)
    - Business (for example - video meetings, online document collaboration)
    - Council / Government services

Concerns

- Remote properties may be left without Internet access, due to current provider deeming it uneconomic to continue service but new providers unwilling to connect or cost of connection too expensive
- New provider cherry picking easy to connect properties, *e.g*. many house in small geographic area, leaving more remote properties out
- Loss of power meaning loss of communication especially as all telephone services will from late 2025 / early 2026 become digital. Currently copper based telephone services can continue in event of power outage as power provide over the copper telephone line form the exchange.

Suggestions

- Hold concurrent virtual and physical presence meeting for community so more could attend
- Hold meeting at Ysgol Bro Dinefwr for parents, and parents of primary schools, in Dinefwr Cennen and Llanfihangel Aberbythych Community Council areas. *Note* - Dyffryn Cennen Community Council area is also working with Broadway Broadband Cymru and have recently reached the 30% threshold.
- Add contact information to future communications to those living in Llanfihangel Aberbythych Community Council area

Thank you very much to those who have registered already and there is no need to do so again.

If you wish to register your interest in the scheme, please do so in one of the following ways:

Visit www.broadwaybroadband.co.uk, click the Register button enter your postcode to register your interest and follow the prompts

Or

Complete the form below and return it to either address at the bottom.

A reminder that at this stage you are NOT committing to take the service, just registering your interest. Please do this as soon as possible.

If you have further questions, please visit Broadways comprehensive FAQ page: www.broadwaybroadband.co.uk/faq

More community meetings can be held if residents of LACC area decide it would be appropriate.

Llanfihangel Aberbythych Community Fibre-Optic Broadband Upgrade Initiative

I / we wish to express an interest in the Llanfihangel Aberbythych Community Fibre-Optic Broadband Upgrade Initiative. I understand the information I / we provide will be shared with the preferred provider of the ultra-fast fibre-optic broadband service in the Llanfihangel Aberbythych Community Council area.

Please complete **IN BLOCK CAPITALS** a separate form for each individual household or business *(for example, if you have a house and a separate holiday cottage, please complete two forms)*

Your name:	
Your full address:	
Postcode:	
Your telephone number(s):	
Your email address:	
Your signature(s):	

Please return your completed form to the following:
Huw Pearce, Llys Y Nant, Milo, Ammanford, Carmarthenshire SA18 3NZ
Or
Mike Smith, Abercamlais, Golden Grove SA32 8LX