

Nether Wallop High Speed Broadband Status on 13 June 2022

Back in December 2020 in an attempt to improve the poor internet access speeds in The Wallops I started a Community Fibre Partnership with Openreach. By September 1st 2021 the scheme had been publicized in the community, split into 2 schemes, one for Over wallop and one for Nether Wallop and a proposed scheme produced for NW (which I carried forward, while another volunteer worked on OW). The NW scheme was costed by Openreach, for 364 premises it would cost £69k or £192 for each.

To go ahead people have to commit to take FTTP and for each domestic sign up Openreach can claim £1500 in government grants and £3500 for each business, commitments were obtained from 84 people including about 10 business so close to £150k in potential grants. Openreach have two options to proceed the “contracted” route in which they sign a contract with the Parish Council, however if you can obtain commitments in excess of their costs plus 30% (i.e. £69K + 30% = £96k) they will take the “demand” route and go ahead without a contract. The logic being that they have enough leeway in the commitments that even if a few drop out, move away etc they can still cover their infrastructure costs. With more than than £150K in commitments we easily met the “demand” criteria, so you might think a scheme would be going full steam ahead – and it probably would if not for the DCMS.

After chasing Openreach numerous times on 19th Jan 2022 I got a message that all projects were paused for 8 or 9 weeks while the DCMS decided where in Hampshire to spend another small tranche of funding under the Project Gigabit initiative. I chased again in mid-April, things are still held up by the DCMS. I chased again last week and things are still held up by the DCMS, I have had two rounds of emails with our MP Caroline Nokes requesting her help in chivvying the DCMS and while she has been extremely sympathetic and has been in touch with the DCMS this has so far not produced results.

So, we can thank the DCMS for all the delays!

Ian Scott