

## Broadband Champions Update – December 2013



**Merry Christmas and a happy New Year from the Connecting Cambridgeshire team**

### **A busy year for Connecting Cambridgeshire**

It's been a busy year for the Connecting Cambridgeshire broadband programme, culminating in the first cabinets going live with superfast broadband. As 2013 draws to a close, we think it's worth reflecting briefly on how far we have come in less than nine months.

When the contract was signed with BT on 8 March 2013, our ambition was to start rolling out fibre broadband by the end of the year - and we did it a month earlier than expected. Connecting Cambridgeshire and Openreach teams have worked hard to ensure that 15 fibre cabinets across the county are connected by Christmas - the first of around 500 new cabinets.

We could not have done it without your support. With your help a record 25,000 people registered for the Connecting Cambridgeshire campaign showing the strong demand for better broadband, and helping us to get the best infrastructure deal for the county - delivering 98% fibre by the end of 2015.

We appreciate that it has not been easy having to explain to your communities where they come in the roll-out process and why some will have to wait longer than others. But doing it in the most cost effective way means we can reach our targets and more by the end of 2015.

You may think there is not much for Broadband Champions to do until fibre broadband is live in your area. However, the feedback from Grafham (overleaf) underlines what an important role you have to play in helping us to inform and enthuse your communities about the benefits of faster broadband for homes and businesses - both before and after it arrives.

We are planning another Broadband Champions event in April 2014 to discuss progress, share ideas and answer your queries. In the meantime, we look forward to working with you and your communities to keep up the momentum.

### **Keeping you informed as cabinets go live**

We want you to be among the first to know when new fibre broadband cabinets in your area will be going live and accepting orders for superfast broadband, so we will give you advanced notice by email.

New live cabinets will be confirmed on the Connecting Cambridgeshire website [‘my area’ pages](#) for each area with links to a new interactive map showing the locations of the cabinets and advice on [‘How to get Superfast Broadband’](#). We will also be announcing the new live cabinets by emailing people who registered for updates, on Twitter @ConnectingCambs and in regular news bulletins on the website home page.

To support this, we can offer a package of publicity materials including A4 posters, postcards, generic article for websites/newsletters and common Q&As, which you may find useful to spread the word and answer people's queries about upgrading to superfast broadband. Do let us know what you need by emailing [contact@connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk](mailto:contact@connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk) or calling Tony on 01223 703293.

## **Superfast take-up reflects demand**

Over 20% of households have upgraded to superfast broadband in Grafham village since their local cabinet went live with fibre, reflecting the pent-up demand for better connectivity in rural areas. At least 53 households in Grafham have signed up for superfast broadband in just three weeks.

This terrific take-up is testament to the efforts of local Broadband Champions Alastair Brydon and Chris Bulow, who set up a stall at the Grafham Village Christmas Fair to help residents find out more about upgrading to superfast.

Connecting Cambridgeshire provided posters and balloons for the stall, which was equipped with a laptop and large screen, 'before and after' speed tests, a detailed Q&A sheet, and advice from Mark Heath's website to answer people's queries.

The champions spoke to around 30 people, many of them new faces and found that most were planning to upgrade to superfast broadband and some were already benefiting. Here are some of the residents' comments:

*"it's great, now my grandson - who's 11 - will come and visit his gran again as before - he didn't want to come recently as he couldn't use his iPad".*

*"everything is so much smoother and faster now" "now my son or daughter doesn't keep complaining about the speed".*

*"the whole family can do things at the same time, no slowing down on Friday night and at the weekends"*

Chris Bulow said: "It was a useful day, informative for us and we think for the people who approached us to talk about superfast. The fair had a steady stream of visitors and our table was a popular destination. We were able to tell people the likely speeds to expect when they upgraded and also show them where and how to upgrade on their chosen suppliers sites and the probable costs involved. Most accepted that an average additional £10 per month was a price worth paying.

"We would highly recommend other champions take advantage of an event of this sort after their own cabinets and exchanges go live; it was an ideal opportunity to communicate with local people, face-to-face and we found that they were keen to discuss their new broadband or to ask further questions before going away to place their order, as well as to express their thanks for the work undertaken. As part of the Digital Champion role, its clear there's still work to be done even after super fast comes to your community and such an event cements the community aspect of this service.

Chris and Alastair also provided useful feedback from the day, which you can find on the [Champions page](#) on the Connecting Cambridgeshire website.

## **Destination Digital**

Please encourage businesses in your area to register their interest in the new Destination Digital business support project, which is being launched early in 2014 as part of the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme. The project will support SMEs in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to achieve better connectivity, be more innovative, adopt broadband-enabled technologies, and boost productivity and profitability – with over £4.5m European and Central Government funding available. Businesses can find out more and register their interest on the [Connecting Cambridgeshire website](#).

Connecting Cambridgeshire will be hosting a local supplier event in January to inform businesses of opportunities to secure new business from hundreds of companies expected to apply for funding towards better broadband connectivity, digital products and services. The event is supported by Cambridge Network, OneNucleus and Cambridge Cleantech. Spaces are limited and registration is essential. Businesses can register for the event on the [Cambridgeshire Wireless website](#)

The Connecting Cambridgeshire team can be contacted by email at [contact@connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk](mailto:contact@connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk) if you have any further queries.