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Hello neighbours!

I hope you have been keeping well and safe this very strange year. We have now lived here for 10 years and some of you we know and some we don't... It is crazy how time flies!

As we are now working from home more and relying more and more on the need for better internet connection speeds (not least for the children!), I have been doing some research into the latest technologies available. Recently I came across a government grant scheme called the "Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme". I have enclosed some more information about this scheme with this letter.

I am hoping to get together a number of interested households who would be interested in signing up a "Fibre to the premises" (FTTP) solution which would give us a much faster and more reliable internet connection and allow us to access this government funding.

We have the opportunity to set up a "community fibre partnership" with Openreach (again more information in the enclosed) which could help bring this infrastructure to our rural area and get us better connected, at hopefully little or no cost to ourselves.

Please have a look at the further information enclosed - I have tried to keep it as low-tech as possible and there is quite a lot to read, so in summary:

- We come together to create a "Mattishall community fibre group" with Openreach
- Openreach work out the cost to implement a fibre to the door solution to our community group
- Government grants are available to support the costs, £1,500 per household, £3,500 per business, we pay the balance between us
- no obligation at this stage, a simple expression of interest to Openreach understand the scale of the solution
- there is no need to change internet provider, Openreach provide the infrastructure that internet providers utilise
- Expression of interests need to be completed by end of October 2020

If you would be interested in finding out more (at absolutely no obligation at this stage) then please let me know by filling out the enclosed form or else drop me an email to [james@southgreenfarm.co.uk](mailto:james@southgreenfarm.co.uk)

With very best wishes,



James Ellis

**YES! I am interested in getting faster and more reliable internet speeds and would like you to add my details to the group:**

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Postcode: .....

Landline phone number: .....

Mobile / other best number to contact you on: .....

Email address: .....

(We plan to do further updates via email rather than paper)

Would you be willing / able to offer help and support with the community group, if we are able to get this project off the ground?

YES / NO

*Thank you - we will use these details to add your interest to the Openreach Community Fibre Partnership Portal and they will not be used for any other purpose!*

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### **We're in the 5%**

Around 5% of the UK isn't covered in existing national fibre broadband rollout plans and we fall into that group. We're not content with that, so want to work in partnership with Openreach to get superfast broadband to our homes.

We've set up the Mattishall community fibre partnership to jointly fund the cost of a new fibre broadband cabinet that will be connected to the national fibre network. Openreach will fund a large chunk of the cost, there are government grants available for some of the cost and we will need to cover the remainder ourselves. Once we know the costs from Openreach then we will share those with everyone who has expressed an interest.

We need superfast broadband to support in an increasing number of internet-capable devices in the home, which include:

- streamed video services, such as YouTube, Netflix, BBC iPlayer, ITV Player, NowTV, Netflix, Amazon and BT TV
- TV and video download services, such as Sky Anytime Plus and Apple iTunes
- fast downloading of HD video content (rather than standard definition content)
- streamed music services, such as Spotify
- voice and video telephony services, such as Zoom, Skype and Apple FaceTime
- online backup services, such as Carbonite, Livedrive and Apple iCloud.
- BBC iPlayer requires at least 3Mbps to stream HD content, and Netflix can demand 6Mbps or more to stream high-quality video.
- Online backups of important content, such as family photographs, can be unbearably slow with conventional broadband.

Without superfast broadband, we will have an increasingly reduced set of online services to choose from.

### **What is a community fibre partnership?**

Openreach work with our local community to build a customised fibre solution to bring fibre broadband to homes and businesses.

They put a joint funding arrangement in place, which means they contribute some of the costs and our community funds the rest. They will then build the most affordable solution they can to meet our needs. They'll also advise on any grants we might be able to get to help pay for our part e.g. from local authorities or the Government.

See more at <https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/community-fibre-partnerships>

## **What is the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme?**

Gigabit-capable broadband connections offer the fastest and most reliable speeds available, and the Government is committed to a vision of a digitally connected Britain.

The Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme has the strategic objective of increasing gigabit-capable coverage across the UK. Starting in March 2018, the programme launched the first wave of its programme, designed to encourage broadband service providers to build full-fibre networks in the UK for small to medium-sized businesses and nearby residents when part of a group scheme. The £67m fund was successfully used over two years and has now closed for new applications.

In May 2019, the programme launched its second wave of funding to support the cost of installing gigabit-capable broadband to homes and businesses in rural areas of the UK when part of a group scheme.

Rural premises with broadband speeds of less than 100Mbps can use vouchers worth £1,500 per home and up to £3,500 for each small to medium-sized business (SME) to support the cost of installing new fast and reliable connections.

See more at <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>

## **What is Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP)?**

The future is full fibre broadband – and telecoms companies are delivering this through Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) technology. This is where pure fibre optic cables connect homes and businesses straight to the exchange providing a more reliable and resilient service, meaning the connection is less likely to drop out or slow down at peak times or in extreme weather.

The network needs to be future-proof so it's fit for the massive increase of data usage and new technologies we'll see over the coming years and this is how they are doing it (well, in large towns and cities they are, but not necessarily in rural areas!).

An FTTP connection also brings speeds of up to 1 gigabit per second (Gbps) – enough to stream 200 HD movies at the same time. 1Gbps is about 24 times faster than the current UK average broadband speed of 46 megabits per second (Mbps) and we can't get speeds that fast even where we live!

See more at

[https://communityfibre.openreach.co.uk/portal/assets/uploads/resources/1551210726\\_FTTP%20benefits%20brochure.pdf](https://communityfibre.openreach.co.uk/portal/assets/uploads/resources/1551210726_FTTP%20benefits%20brochure.pdf)

## **Superfast broadband is now almost the same price as basic broadband**

The prices of superfast broadband services are falling significantly, and there's already a small difference between the price of superfast broadband and basic broadband services.

Ofcom found that the difference between the monthly rental fees for ISPs' (Internet Service Providers) lowest-cost 'superfast' services and their lowest-cost 'current generation' services is often relatively small, with the price differential ranging from £5 - £10 a month for most ISPs that offer both types of service.

## **Superfast broadband could increase house prices**

A survey carried out by [ispreview.co.uk](http://ispreview.co.uk) found that 68.8% of respondents would be put off from buying a "beautiful new house", if it lacked fast broadband. 73.9% considered that broadband was critically important" to their home life.

## Conventional broadband services can be unreliable

ADSL broadband is carried along copper cables all the way from the exchange to homes and business premises. Inevitably, the broadband signal suffers a reduction in strength (attenuation) as it travels along the copper cable from the exchange to broadband modems, reducing the speeds that can be delivered and making the broadband signal susceptible to interference. In contrast, high-speed fibre broadband utilises fibre-optic cables, which are immune to interference and do not suffer the signal attenuation experienced by copper lines. As a result, superfast broadband services deliver significantly higher speeds and are more reliable.

## Superfast broadband improves work-life balance and enables home working

Obviously with us all spending more time locked down in our homes this year, it has been necessary for many of us to work from home and even teach children at home! Homeworking for many is likely to be a reality for a long time now and potentially allows many people to achieve a better work-life balance, particularly parents with young children. Conventional broadband services often don't permit reliable access to business systems or allow employees to communicate effectively with colleagues or customers through video conferencing, for example.

## Why Openreach?

They look after the fibres, wires and cables that connect the country and on top of that offers the greatest choice of service providers. Their network is available to all UK communications providers – that's well over 500 – so once the fibre cable is delivered to our houses, each one of us will be able to upgrade to superfast via a service provider of our own choice and shop around for the best deals. Their infrastructure already provides a complete network covering virtually the entire country and supporting 28 million phone lines. They maintain and improve our infrastructure so once our new fibre-to-the-premises is installed, it will become part of that infrastructure..

## Sign up now with no obligation

The first thing we need to understand is how many of you are interested in this?

If you are, then please let me know by filling out the enclosed form and dropping it off to me at **South Green Farm, South Green, Mattishall, NR20 3JZ**

Or send me an email with your details to [james@southgreenfarm.co.uk](mailto:james@southgreenfarm.co.uk)

## NEXT STEPS

These are what we understand to be the next steps in the community fibre partnership / gigabit broadband voucher scheme:

1. **GATHERING DATA:** First, we need to gather names and addresses of people who are interested. These addresses are all entered onto the Openreach Community Fibre Portal website.  
*(we are aiming to do this by the end of October 2020)*
2. **BALLPARK COST:** Openreach will then give us an indicative cost for FTTP to the premises which have shown interest
3. **DESIGN:** We will discuss the costs with you all and let Openreach know if we would like to proceed
4. **PROPOSAL:** Once the final specification has been agreed then we will agree with Openreach that we want to proceed.
5. **CONTRACT:** At this stage we will gather the contributions and sign a contract with Openreach
6. **DELIVERY:** Openreach will then build the infrastructure and let us know when it is live and we can order upgraded services!