

VILLAGE BROADBAND

On Wednesday 9th August about 30 residents attended a public meeting in the village hall to hear plans to bring Full Fibre Broadband to the village.

Representatives were present from VONEUS, the broadband provider, the contractors and Epwell Parish Council.

Shutford and Sibford roads already have the VONEUS infrastructure available to them through the provision of a series of new overground poles erected in the last few weeks.

Most outlying farms also have this service available to them. The exceptions to this are The Croft and Sands Farm. Epwell Parish council will endeavour to ensure that VONEUS makes good on their plans to connect these properties to the network.

The discussion on Wednesday evening centred around whether to provide the remaining village, Birds Lane, Back Lane, Church Lane and The Square, with the infrastructure via overhead cable or as originally planned, underground.

It was decided that although more disruptive, in the long term the laying of cable underground would have less impact on the character and environment of the village. Work will begin as soon as the contractors have the necessary permission from Oxfordshire County Council to implement road closures, where required.

Residents will be forewarned and informed of any disruption that will be caused by road closures.

The installation of fibre to each house will need to be arranged between VONEUS and each individual household.

THERE IS NO OBLIGATION TO SIGN UP WITH VONEUS. If you are happy with your existing provider then stay with them.

BT intend to switch off their analogue phone service on 31st December 2025, after which all phone services will be provided over the internet.

It is our understanding that in order to maintain a voice phone service after 2025 the only condition that you will need to fulfil is you have some type of internet service. IT DOES NOT NEED TO BE VONEUS'S FULL FIBRE.

The initiative to bring fast broadband to the rural communities is a national priority and central funding allocated. The scheme to provide such a service to Epwell has been costed and budgeted for and the provider chosen.

There will be no cost incurred by the Parish Council or to residents other than the normal monthly charge like the one you pay at the moment to your current provider.

The only exception to this may be if your property is classed as requiring a non-standard installation. This will be made clear if and when you make enquiries with a provider such as Voneus.

The next few years will see an exponential increase in technologies that rely wholly or partly on a fast and reliable internet service. The provision of such a service to Epwell will benefit everyone: the

home workers, shoppers, entertainment viewers - not to mention the generation that regards a 500Mbps speed as a human right.

The Parish Council will endeavour to keep lines of communication open with all stakeholders in order to keep residents informed.

If you have any questions please approach members of the parish council who will endeavour to obtain answers ASAP.

15th August 2023

Gavin Lloyd Thomas
Chair Epwell Parish Council