

Dear Residents

Internet service provision – There are several initiatives under consideration for the area and I would be glad to have your responses to each. Below is a letter generated by a resident championing the latest BT technology, fibre to the home, in which you may be prepared to invest. Please read it carefully and, as requested in the letter, let me have your thoughts so that I can confer with him on the viability and cost of pursuing such a scheme for Chilworth, which I will do if there is sufficient interest.

Meanwhile, I have been in contact with Virgin Media regarding the service which they are offering elsewhere in Test Valley. The company runs cabling along Chilworth Road to the Science Park where it serves two companies. However this service is run by its commercial arm rather than its residential arm. I am asking them to consider whether or not they would be prepared to run spurs off it to private residences and this is under consideration. They also run cabling along Winchester Road to serve the Chandlers Ford area. I would be glad to know of the level of interest in obtaining a Virgin Media service, which would also be fibre to the home, but by different infrastructure from BT's. You can register interest on the following website which may be helpful when Virgin review the area. www.virginmedia.com/postcode-checker. Let me know your thoughts.

I am also pursuing a further grant from Hants County Council to rewire those properties in the Old Village and Manor Road areas, to a cabinet more local to them than the one on Bassett Avenue. BT seem to have re-considered their obdurate approach to doing such work although this is not confirmation yet that they will act (after 6 years of agitation!).

Letter from private resident to the community:

Dear Neighbour - Reference: Fibre Optic Telephone and Internet Cables to Individual Homes.

You will be aware that the UK is undergoing a major upgrade of the national telecommunications infrastructure, to meet future domestic needs. In general terms and with current technology, this means the replacement of copper wiring with fibre-optic cabling, although 5G wireless technology may offer ultimately similar capabilities. Long term residents may recall that much of Southampton was dug up around 1990 and cabled by NTL, to install a high capacity domestic network which is now owned and managed by Virgin Media. Sadly, the property density and demand in much of Bassett and Chilworth was deemed to be too low to justify the commercial capital investment.

In consequence, we are still dependent upon the much slower copper telephone lines to our homes, 30 years later. The Hampshire Superfast Broadband Programme has funded fibre optic cabling from the Burgess Road Exchange to our Green Box Cabinets 7, 12 and 15, with a significant capability upgrade. However, telecommunications distribution from the Cabinet to the Home remains dependent on the historic copper infrastructure for most of us. Moreover, data capacity falls off significantly with distance from the Cabinets, leading to the slow and disjointed experience of digital TV, for example.

Many of you may well be satisfied with your current capacity for routine internet activity. However, technology has already moved on, as has the need for high capacity digital feeds into your home.

BT is now rolling out a new technology, GFast, which brings Fibre-optic cable closer to your home, to nearby cable ducts and telegraph poles, but the final leg into your home remains your copper cable. GFast promises speeds of up to 300Megabits per second, but transmission rates fall off substantially with distance, which is a particular problem in this area. Chilworth once again seems unlikely to be high in the pecking order for a public funded upgrade. Even if and when GFast arrives locally, the copper will still need replacement at some point. It is now clear that homes which have direct fibre-optic services are now commanding a premium nationally in the property market. This eventually offsets the costs of any system upgrades.

The Community Funded Infrastructure Option : Chilworth has a rich commercial fibre-optic infrastructure around the Science Park and along the A27, so linking the existing network to domestic properties should not be too challenging. BT is now offering to accelerate the installation of Fibre to the Home through Community Fibre Partnerships (see <https://communityfibre.openreach.co.uk/>). (continued overleaf)

Please contact me at alisonf@btinternet.com to be on the mailing list for more frequent updates about burglaries, utility failures, local news etc, Tel: 023-8076-9987

(cont)..

BT is shy about quoting costs for such bespoke projects, and it is therefore very difficult to estimate the shape of any possible solution. We do not know how many residents would need to become involved and at what level of personal capital investment. However, you may consider that the shared investment of a capital sum to secure a permanent fibre-optic solution to your home in the near future by “going private” with BT, Virgin or any other proficient supplier at this point would be well worth a significant upfront investment.

Could I therefore suggest feedback to Alison Finlay, to help establish: - how many local residents would be willing to join a Community Fibre Partnership with BT, Virgin, or any of the other new market entrants in the “Fibre to the Home” market; - and at what capital investment level you would be prepared to participate in order to secure a fair, permanent, community cooperative and definitive fibre-optic telecommunications solution for your home now, rather than at an indeterminate time in future.

With Best Wishes – A Chilworth resident.

Local burglaries and other incidents – Several residents have reported approaches from people knocking on doors with various spurious offers or requests. All such incidents should be reported to the police via 101 as they are now aware of the recent issues and can connect them. Photos could also be helpful and would act as a deterrent.

What appears to be a pre-planned burglary in the Chilworth Drove area took place recently and any CCTV footage in that area or the Manor Road area may help investigations. Let me know and I’ll pass details on.

Supporting a young man in our community – Max Taylor, who lives in Chilworth, is travelling to help at an orphanage in South America next month, during his school holidays. You can read more about the venture on his Just Giving page. Via the link below, you can show your support for this worthwhile cause.

www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/max-taylor

Max also has a drone which allows him to take aerial photos of homes, with permission and for a small fee. This view of a property can prove very helpful for those wanting to use the view for promotional purposes or as a general token for family and friends. Again, profits would help to support the initiative. I will pass your enquiries on to him if you let me know of your interest fairly soon.

Gardening Club – 12th June 7:30pm. The speaker will be Steve Austin. He was formerly engaged as a gardener at Beth Chatto’s garden in Essex. Beth was a renowned and unique garden designer, and since booking the speaker, I note from Press reports that she died a few weeks ago. The meeting will be at Chilworth Manor and visitors are welcome to attend for a small fee. Usual extras include fun quiz, raffle, wine tasting, etc.

Charity Bridge Drive – Friday 15th June at Chilworth Hall. This Rubber Bridge event will be run by Chilworth Bridge Club with profits going to the Phelan McDermid Syndrome Foundation UK charity. Places cost £8 per head. Apply to Elizabeth Marks on 01794-512199 or elizabethmarks0@gmail.com. Raffle etc.

Best wishes

Alison

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