

Broadband is Coming!

Wychwood action pays off

Broadband is now coming to the Wychwoods as a direct result of your registrations of interest! A group of some 50 attended a recent meeting at the Beaconsfield Hall to hear the plans from Oxfordshire Rural Broadband. ORB is a community owned enterprise that has been formed by the local broadband activists. The simple aim is to bring broadband to all communities in our area.

The first roll out in this area of West Oxfordshire will be the Wychwoods with initial funding from SEEDA and the SOG Co-Op. Neil Homer, the Head of Corporate Development for SOG Co-Op commented; "This is crucially important for the local community. We are committed to investing in the community and supporting social enterprise."

The Technology Bit

The infrastructure is based around a 2Mb leased line into the local BT exchange. From there, a combination of BT lines and directional wireless links will be used to build a Community Network through the villages. For the final connection, there will be a wireless link to a very small aerial (1/4 the size of a TV aerial) on each customers' premises which will be connected to a small Ethernet socket inside the house similar in size and shape to the current BT phone socket. Many newer PC's have already Ethernet built in so the users may not have to install anything new in their PC. You will also be able to retain your existing email addresses and web addresses.

The wireless link is very low power, less than 1/10th of the power of a mobile phone so there is no health risk at all and the entire infrastructure has such low visual impact that it does not need planning permission even in conservation areas.

So why does this matter

Broadband means faster and more convenient Internet access, useful for everyone and particularly important for those of you already sharing access at home through a single dial up connection. Looking ahead there is no doubt that the Internet is here to stay and the lack of broadband access will hold back the development of the local communities. The added attraction of a local Community Network opens up the possibilities of future facilities such as telecare for the elderly, lower cost CCTV, remote learning from the library and new services for local small businesses.

Making it all happen

We now need your continued support for what is a real community project. If you are current PC user and want broadband, please register your interest on the ORB site, **www.oxonrb.net**. It is only a 2 minute process and you will be sent details of the service and its availability. *Please note that because of data protection and commercial issues, ORB cannot access your existing registrations with BT and vote4broadband, so please re-register with ORB.*

Mike Watson