

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the article in the October Bulletin regarding the 'new' OxOnline project, which aims to bring high speed broadband access to Oxfordshire by 2015! The following month, a 'letter to the Ed' from a seemingly frustrated resident of Preston Crowmarsh, encouraged the completion of a survey to hopefully 'demand better broadband', since his broadband service is particularly slow. Whilst I have no argument with trying to keep the pressure on OCC with regard to obtaining available County investment and BDUK grants from the government, and then persuading BT to install the service, I would point out that such efforts and campaigns in this regard have been going on for years. My understanding is that 'central' Benson does get an 'adequate' BT landline broadband service (ADSL), and cable is also already available to many. It is the outlying villages who are suffering the most, either because of distance from the exchange and/or quality of the copper or aluminium telephone wires. I have little doubt that with or without our input, high speed broadband will be available to us all in the fullness of time. But what are we supposed to do in the meantime?

Many residents of Ewelme have overcome their previous complete lack of broadband or slow broadband rates by adopting 'fixed' wireless broadband, better known as 3G or mobile broadband. There is probably more familiarity with this widespread and evolving technology from the owning of a modern mobile phone. But by using a fixed 3G 'dongle' or a 3G Wi-Fi router attached to a window pane, most of us in this area can obtain much better in-house broadband rates than can be obtained via landline locally. Indeed, here in Ewelme where the wired majority can only get between 0.5 Mbps and 1 Mbps, broadband by wireless can be up to 10 times faster. This has been the situation here for over 3 years, and even before that, a group of residents shared the broadband connection from one or two households with others via a villagewide wireless network.

I guess what I'm trying to convey, is for those who continue to be frustrated at their current speeds, especially in the outlying rural villages, there is a possible alternative to utilise in the meantime. Many will have also heard of the launch of 4G recently, and while that may take until 2013 to reach this area, this can provide up to 7 times the speed that 3G can currently achieve. Is the Preston Crowmarsh writer aware that there is a Vodafone owned 3G wireless mast currently transmitting in his village (on the edge of RAF Benson)? Similarly, do the residents of Roke and Berrick Salome know that there is another 3G wireless mast owned by Three at Hale Farm

a few hundred metres from their homes? I'm sure I'm teaching egg sucking to many who have already pro-actively taken up this form of Internet access over the last couple of years, but I know that there are still quite a few complainants who are either unaware of the service, or do not know how to go about getting it.

If this information is of any interest to Bulletin readers, they can find out more by Googling 'jenkins ewelme' and choosing one of the articles on 3G, 4G or broadband in general. There is also more about broadband in Ewelme at www.ewelme.info

Chris Jenkins