



February 2021

Dear Resident

You'll hopefully be aware of the current push to bring full fibre broadband to the village to provide Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) by March 2022. I write to you as a key audience who can influence whether this project gets the required backing to enable to the build.

GREAT NEWS!

Residents and business have now pledged a combined 78% of the target, equivalent to £395.5k of pledges. As a community we are within touching distance and I ask for your support to get us to the final target.

Never-before have we as a nation been so reliant on fast, reliable broadband. Demand for data is growing with people inevitably spending more time at home. This pandemic has seen a monumental shift towards homeworking and home-schooling. We take it for granted that we can all share files, make Zoom calls, keep our children entertained and up to date with the latest Netflix shows, video game downloads and more importantly updated with school work and in touch with our family and friends.

Over the past 5 years I've managed the rollout of the existing fibre (over copper) network in the village. Speeds are limited to 80mb at their fastest and the current demand for fast broadband 24/7 is putting a huge strain on the network. The first 50 homes now have FTTP available with speeds up to 900mb and I want to take this further to push it to **every** one of the 1300+ homes in the next 12 months.

The opportunity to bring FTTP to Arnside is centered around Openreach receiving enough government voucher pledges by homes and business. For every voucher pledge, the government will pay Openreach £1500 towards the cost of the build. It is a government initiative to get full fibre to every home and business in the UK by the late 2020s and Openreach is a network build provider who can support these ambitions. Openreach already has a network of ducts and poles connecting every home in Arnside and therefore the capability to blow fibre cables through every duct to reach **every** home and business.

What can I do to help?

'Nudge your neighbour' – If you've already pledged or plan to do so then why not *'nudge your neighbour'* to do the same. That way we achieve the target so much quicker.

What happens if Openreach don't hit the target?

If the target isn't achieved in the coming weeks, then there's NO guarantee a full fibre network will be built by 2025. The current government budget stipulates that every scheme must be registered and 'locked in' by 31st March 2021, so we

have weeks to get everything confirmed. If we don't get enough people to pledge this time round there's no guarantee that Openreach (or any other operator) will receive funding any time soon.

Are there alternatives to Openreach?

B4RN are an option. They have recently built networks in parts of Silverdale and Storth and their speeds are comparable. B4RN however, don't have an existing network to utilise so would need to dig extensively in fields, roads and footpaths to reach every property. B4RN have opened an 'expressions of interest' from residents but to date there is no firm indication of any intention to build in Arnside.

What's my commitment?

If you pledge your voucher you are basically saying you intend to order FTTP when it arrives. Openreach recognises however, that circumstances change over time and it may not be possible to place an order when the time arrives.

How much is FTTP?

The price of FTTP is increasingly competitive. Many providers like BT, SKY and Talk-Talk are keen to get you onboard and will price competitively. Talk-Talk recently offered a 900mb package for £24.99 on a 2-year contract which is cheaper than people pay currently. Openreach don't set prices, that is down to the service provider. Important to note that nowadays people frequently package their broadband, landline, mobile, TV and even gas and electric to take advantage of deals.

How do I pledge my voucher?

Google: Openreach connect my community
CLICK YES when asked if your current speed is less than 100mb
Fill in your postcode and confirm your robotic status!
CLICK Pledge for Arnside Ultrafast Community Project
Takes less than 1 minute to do so.

I've pledged my voucher and received an email about gigabit broadband from the DCMS. What do I do?

Excellent. The scheme has already been registered by Openreach in advance of the target being met. This enables a head start on the administrative process. Please check your junk mail if you have pledged your voucher but not yet received an email from the DCMS. Simply click and validate your details and commitment. Thank you.

Many of you may be reading my regular updates posted on the Arnside Past and Present page on Facebook. This is a fantastic opportunity for all the village and I'm grateful, on behalf of Openreach, for your support. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

If you have any questions, please drop me an email on the address below.

Yours faithfully

Matt Fishwick

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On behalf of Openreach Ltd

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