

Ashendon Broadband Group
Report to the Parish Council, 15th April 2019

Villagers will recall that in 2017 The Group obtained an estimate of £65,000 from Openreach to install fibre broadband throughout Ashendon and Pollicott. A Community Interest Company ("Connecting Ashendon") was registered and through this the required sum was raised very swiftly in via £35,000 from a government voucher scheme and £30,000 from personal donations and village fund raising events.

The company then signed a contract with Openreach with an agreed latest commissioning date of March 2018. Following a litany of delays, errors, and poor communication the fibre system was eventually connected to all areas of our community by July 2018, albeit via a temporary above-ground fibre cable from Watbridge Cottages to East Farm. We understand that Openreach have now undertaken to lay this cable in a permanent underground duct running through the East Farm fields to the north of the road to Westcott, with work starting when the weather allows this Spring.

Despite the vulnerability of the temporary cable it has only been severed once since installation, and speeds of up to 70 Mbps are now available to all properties in Ashendon and Pollicott. The Community Interest Company has some funds remaining due to a successful bid for a donation from Thames Water and some of these are earmarked for the final Openreach payment, although we will be pressing for this to be waived. When the company is dissolved, then any subsequent surplus must by law go to a charity or charities which benefit the entire community, as decided by the company directors.

David Crwys-Williams
Ashendon Broadband Group

9th April 2019