

Great Asby **BROADBAND**

In our last Newsletter, issued in April 2015, we announced the planned arrival of superfast broadband to be delivered by internet service providers (ISPs) over a network built and managed by BT Openreach. The method of delivery is *fibre to the premises* (FttP) which operates independently of the telephone network and can achieve download speeds of up to 330Mbps. Installation of the network had already begun at the time of our announcement and has continued right up to the beginning of this month. There are parts of the network that are still to be completed but most residents in Great Asby are now able to place orders for the new service.

What is FttP?

Fibre to the premises broadband delivers high speed connections to the internet over fibre-optic cable, data transmission being achieved through the passage of light rather than electricity. The speeds at which this happens can be as high as 10,000 Mbps and, unlike data transmission over copper wires, those speeds do not diminish with increasing distance travelled. The network in Great Asby is fed by fibre-optic cable from the Appleby exchange and has been built with a number of connection points (called manifolds) around the village from which individual premises can be connected. Connections can be made either overhead from poles or underground in much the same way as the telephone system. Because FttP does not use the existing telephone system a new fibre connection will have to be made to each household that takes the service in every case.

Installation is done in two stages: first, a fibre cable is brought to the connection point on the outside of the building where it is fixed to the wall and then a second fibre cable is joined to the first and brought through the wall to terminate in a small mains-powered box inside the house. This box converts the signal from a light-based medium to an electronic medium and in turn connects by Ethernet cable to a wi-fi router in much the same way as the GAB connection is currently delivered inside the property.

Will all properties be able to take the service?

We estimate that about 90% of properties in Great Asby will be connectable in a straightforward way. BT Wholesale operates a database which can be interrogated via a publicly available website and will indicate what forms of broadband connection, if any, are available. It is this database that ISPs use to determine if any order that is placed can be delivered. In some cases a survey is required to confirm whether a connection can be delivered and by what means. Although people normally pay a standard installation charge (if any), there may well be instances when additional installation charges will apply because of the distance travelled or the terrain to be covered between the manifold and the property. In about 10% of cases we are fairly certain that considerable excess construction charges (as they are called) will apply and we have recently submitted a proposal to BT for a community-led project to extend the reach of the network to enable those properties (known as *the outliers*) to be connected affordably.

As mentioned above there are parts of Great Asby where connections are not available because there remains work to be done to complete the network installation. They are Town Head, North View and the stretch of road between the Drybeck crossroads and Bowbridge. We expect those properties to be able to apply for connections by about the end of February. To check the current status of your property find <http://www.dslchecker.bt.com/adsl/adslchecker.welcome> on your internet browser and enter a landline number or address and postcode. If your property is connectable you should see the following:

/over

Telephone Number 0176835.... on Exchange APPLEBY is served by Cabinet X

Featured Products	Downstream Line Rate(Mbps)	Upstream Line Rate(Mbps)	Availability Date
WBC FTTP	Up to 330	Up to 30	Available

Our records show the following FTTP network service information for these premises:- Single Dwelling Unit Residential OH Feed. (Where your property would be fed by overhead cable.) **or...**

Our records show the following FTTP network service information for these premises:- Single Dwelling Unit Residential UG partial Direct In Ground. (Where your property would be fed by underground cable.)

How do I order the service?

At the time of writing we have been able to identify only two ISPs that are accepting orders for FttP broadband in Great Asby. They are *BT Retail* and *Zen Internet*. Orders can be placed either online via the ISP's website or by phone. Normally it is necessary to rent a BT landline in order to place an order and in instances where this is not the case, it is likely that higher monthly charges will be made. BT and Zen can be contacted as follows:

BT Retail

Online: [Click here](#)

You will be asked to enter your phone number and postcode and then shown a number of packages to choose from. You should look for BT Infinity which will offer download speeds starting at 38Mbps.

By phone: Monday to Saturday 8am - 8pm, Sunday 9am - 6pm

From a landline: 0800 100 400

From a mobile: 0330 1234 150 (extra charges may apply)

Zen Internet

Online: [Click here](#)

You will be shown a number of packages to choose from (prices are ex-VAT) and invited to check your line. **It is best to phone Zen using the number indicated** because checking your line from the link on this page produces confusing results.

By email: sales@zen.co.uk

By phone: 9am - 5pm weekdays - 01706 902001

In both cases, the ISP should confirm that fibre to the premises is available. If they tell you it is not, inform them that a fibre to the premises network has been installed and commissioned in your postcode and ask them to check with BT Openreach. All installations are done by BT Openreach in two visits. They may also need to undertake a preliminary survey.

If you have difficulty placing an order GAB has contacts in BT and Zen who have offered to facilitate the ordering process. Please contact us at info@gabroadband.net for help. Please note that we are not in a position to make recommendations so which ISP you place an order with is entirely up to you but there are certain things you should take into account as follows:-

- GAB currently delivers up to 18Mbps download and upload speeds. Fibre packages start at approximately 40Mbps download and upload speed tends to be about 25% of download.
- Contracts are generally for 12 months initially after which one month's notice is required to terminate.
- Consider what other services, such as landline, mobile and TV, may be bundled in with broadband in the different packages.

- Consider whether you need a static IP address¹ and which ISP will supply one.
- Cheaper packages may have monthly data limits applied. Check what the cost to you would be if those limits are exceeded. It may be cheaper in the long run to opt for an unlimited package, especially if you plan to stream TV, audio & video.
- BT will provide a new router (delivery charges only) and Zen can supply a suitable router at extra cost. It should be possible to use your existing router although, if you opt for a higher speed connection (80Mbps plus), your router may struggle to keep up.

Can't I just stay with GAB?

The short answer to that question is No! The GAB network was only ever intended as a stop-gap solution and it is not sustainable indefinitely as it is run entirely by (ageing) volunteers. In any case, as subscribers migrate to the new service, our income will decrease and before long we will cease to be financially viable.

Consequently, we are encouraging subscribers to migrate to the new network in a timely fashion but at this early stage it is difficult to anticipate how that will unfold. At whatever rate subscribers leave GAB there will come a point (fairly early on) at which we will have to start drawing on our financial reserves in order to keep the service going. Then there will come another point at which we will announce a final closing date for the GAB service by when all subscribers who can will have to take the new service, or be disconnected. Overall we expect to close GAB down within twelve months from the first new connection becoming operational. Depending on the rate of migration and how long our reserves last, it could happen quite a bit sooner than that.

We recognise that this will make things difficult for the outliers who currently subscribe to GAB and, as previously mentioned, we are pursuing a solution with them. If the worst happens and GAB closes down before that solution is in place, there will be an alternative in the form of the Government's universal service commitment for all those who can only access broadband of 2Mbps download or less. This will be a voucher scheme, administered by Cumbria County Council, that will fund the installation of a satellite solution. Such a solution, though better than nothing, is unlikely to be welcomed especially by those subscribers who gave up satellite in favour of GAB.

How do I unsubscribe from GAB?

When you have ordered a fibre connection, it has been installed and is operating to your satisfaction, you should contact us at info@gabroadband.net and let us know that you wish to terminate your GAB subscription. There is no minimum notice period. You will be asked to leave the wireless device powered up while we disable it remotely and we will then notify you that you can switch it off: **please see below if you host a node or a relay**. Remember to cancel the standing order that pays your GAB subscription.

Note for Members: if you are also a Member of the GAB Company, as roughly one-third of our Subscribers are, we shall treat the termination of your subscription as the automatic termination of your Membership **unless you tell us otherwise**. If you do wish to remain a Member of the Company during the run-down (there is, of course, no obligation to do so), please let us know; we shall then charge you a nominal subscription of £1 per month to keep your Membership valid.

What happens to the GAB equipment after I have migrated?

The wireless device on your roof and its associated power supply unit belong to GAB but, clearly we will have no further use for it once the service closes down. GAB is prepared to remove unwanted equipment if subscribers wish but we currently intend to do that as a planned exercise in due course rather than in a piecemeal manner.

¹ Your IP address is assigned by the ISP and it is by this that your broadband connection is recognised on the internet. A static IP address is one that never changes whereas a dynamic IP address can change from time to time as the ISP shares a limited number of addresses amongst its customers. Only four GAB subscribers have static IP addresses which are assigned because they need to access devices over the internet from remote locations outside their property.

What if I host a node or a relay?

If you host a node or a relay that forms part of the GAB network, this will almost certainly still be in active use. It is important for it to continue to operate while other subscribers are still dependent on it to connect to the internet. As the last subscriber to connect to that node or relay migrates then it will be possible to turn the equipment off. Accordingly, we shall request that the hosting arrangement continues until that stage is reached. This will not prevent the host from taking a new FttP connection in the meantime as the two things can operate alongside each other. At this point we will start to pay the host the equivalent of their current discount to compensate for the power used by the equipment until such time as there is no further need for the node or relay to operate.

What happens to any financial reserves that remain at closure?

As stated already, we cannot predict when the migration process will be complete nor how long we shall need to draw on our financial reserves to maintain the broadband service but there is a possibility that part of those reserves will remain unused when GAB is finally closed down. As a community interest company, GAB is constrained in law as to how it can dispose of its assets and is subject to a principle called “asset lock”. Thus it can only dispose of its assets by selling them at market value or by transferring them to another organisation that shares broadly the same objectives of achieving certain goals for the benefit of the same community, namely the Parish of Asby. As regards any residual financial reserves the only organisation we can currently identify to which GAB could reasonably transfer funds is Asby Parish Council and that is the position that the Board of Directors is likely to adopt should this situation arise.

~~~~~

We hope that you have found this newsletter interesting and informative. If you have any comments, observations, issues or concerns that you would like to raise with us, please contact us preferably by email at [info@gabroadband.net](mailto:info@gabroadband.net) or on 017683 52077 (Miles Mandelson, Chairman); 017683 53433 (John Bevan, Company Secretary).

***The Directors, Great Asby Broadband CIC***