

NGB report - September 2022

This month's report has a mix of news but is mostly positive.

The series of communications with our MSP, Evelyn Tweed, has not produced any clarity of BT Openreach's plans around R100, however the other strand of pressure has resulted in the pent-up approval of the SBVS voucher scheme applications being released. This in turn has allowed Euan to complete several requested installations for his Ultrafast wireless service of which more below.

A downside however is that the status of numerous R100 upgrades around the village has changed from 'By September 2022' to 'During the 2nd half of 2022'. But a redeeming piece of news, for some, is that Openreach are now delivering FTTP connections overhead on telegraph poles. This makes for a much simpler and faster delivery of a fibre infrastructure as in many cases it will utilise existing poles. Where new poles have to be erected instead of underground ducts, wayleave permissions will probably have to be obtained that will delay, or maybe even block, the roll-out if not granted. As I understand the overhead option is already in hand in Lennoxton.

You may have heard me touch on the close down of the analogue phone system that we all know and love which BT have planned for 2025, and the appearance of Digital Voice the digital replacement. If you take out a contract with a new supplier, I have Sky in particular in mind who seem to be at the forefront of this, then they will supply a SoGEA (or digital only service) unless you specifically request that the analogue line continues. As I have reported previously, this may be necessary (though only in the short-term) for services such as a house alarm, Mex alarm, or similar. Another, perhaps, unexpected consequence, is that although your existing analogue phone can still be used, it has to be plugged into the back of the router which may be a different location that at present. An additional wireless adapter may be purchased to help to use existing analogue phones in other locations apart from beside the router.

Euan's Ultrafast service, offering upto 500Mbps down and 200Mbps up, if desired, is now fully live across much of the Trees estate - specifically Rowan, Cedar, Elder & Elm as well as some parts of Beech Drive. Additionally, more installations have been made in Drumbeg Loan where the large number of trees restricts exactly which premises are actually in view of the mast. Most premises in Branziert Road North are within coverage, although again trees and other houses can prevent a clear line of sight to the mast (which is necessary for the wireless system to operate well). The fair weather has enabled Euan to make good progress over the last few weeks and if it continues he hopes to get the last few remaining SBVS voucher installation completed in the next two weeks. The word about the success of the service has got around and it seems there is some renewed interested in Rowan and The Branziert which he is following up though these will now have to be self-funded with the closure of SBVS interim voucher scheme.

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