

Broadband Connectivity

Bishop's Waltham Parish Council understands that certain areas of the parish have unsatisfactory coverage of broadband, mobile signal, or both. Whilst the Parish Council is unable to take any direct action, we do try to lobby government and broadband companies for a minimum acceptable connection for all our residents. We have put together some advice here to follow in the first instance to diagnose connectivity issues, and some possible solutions.

Step one

The first step is to try to properly diagnose the problem.

There are some tips from Ofcom available here to speed up slow broadband:

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/advice/broadband-speeds>

The best test is to connect a computer with a cable directly to your router and do a speed test such as these:

<https://broadbandtest.which.co.uk/>

<https://www.broadbandcompared.co.uk/speed-test>

From these speed tests you should see your download and upload speed in Mbps.

Step two

IF YOUR DOWNLOAD SPEED IS LESS THAN 10Mbps

This is below the 'Universal Service Obligation' which states:

"Every home and business in the UK has the legal right to request a decent, affordable broadband connection. From 20 March 2020, if you can't get a download speed of 10 Mbps and an upload speed of 1 Mbps, you can request an upgraded connection."

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/broadband-usage-need-to-know>

Call BT's USO helpline on 0800 783 0223.

Step three

If your download speed is above the USO minimum of 10Mbps but you still require a better connection then there are other options to look into, including:

1. Fibre to the premises
2. Fixed Wireless Access
3. Alternatives

1. Fibre to the premises

This system uses dedicated Fibre Optic cables all the way to your property rather than the older copper phone wires. Bishop's Waltham does have *some* streets with FTTP available, you can check if these services are available using these sites:

<https://www.trooli.com/>

<https://www.moneysupermarket.com/broadband/>

More about FTTP here:

<https://www.broadbandcompared.co.uk/guides/what-is-ftp-fibre-to-the-premises-explained>

*** Latest News: the rural fibre-to-the-premises contract for Hampshire was awarded to CityFibre in 2023. We are still waiting to see when and where they will be upgrading the network. ***

<https://cityfibre.com/about-us/rollout/projectgigabit/hampshire>

2. Fixed Wireless Access

This system uses the existing 4G and 5G mobile phone networks to connect your home to the internet, rather than telephone cables. It is dependent on mobile signal coverage, which may not be good indoors, even if it is available outdoors.

More on FWA here:

<https://www.which.co.uk/reviews/broadband/article/what-is-broadband/what-is-4g-broadband-aUWwk1O9J0cW>

You can compare FWA broadband contracts here:

<https://www.fasterbroadband.co.uk/mobile-broadband>

Of course, for 4G or 5G broadband to work you must have good signal. Check your coverage yourself, or at a signal checking website:

<https://checker.ofcom.org.uk/en-gb/mobile-coverage>

There are ways to improve indoor signal for a FWA router if the signal is ok outdoors:

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/advice/improving-indoor-coverage>

3. Others

If all the above fails, there are some alternatives on the market. BWPC does not endorse any of these systems, they are merely mentioned as avenues which residents can investigate further.

There is a system called 'Mastband' which uses a small antennae attached to your property to 'lock' onto 4G and 5G mobile signals yielding a stable connection often faster than regular broadband. Installation costs are expected to be £200-250, with a monthly fee of £36-£55 depending on contract.

<https://notspotbroadband.com/rural-broadband-notspot/>

Another, albeit expensive, option is broadband over satellite, as provided by something like Starlink. Hardware costs are currently £225, with a monthly £75 subscription for speeds in the 100-200 Mbps range.

<https://www.starlink.com/residential>