



## Broadband in Street

Internet access has become a vital utility in many people's lives. This has been highlighted more than ever during the last 12 months when so many have relied upon online access for remote working and distance learning, as well as home entertainment.

Street Parish Council were keen to understand the current situation with broadband service within Street, and therefore published an online survey to identify what providers are being used, speeds being obtained, cost and usage. The survey was publicised on social media, inviting all Street residents to take part.

### Results of the Survey

The results of the survey showed that over 98% of those that responded have broadband connected to their property, with less than 2% solely accessing the internet via their mobile phone. Of those with broadband over 50% are now connected by fibre to the cabinet.

Most people are paying between £20 and £40 a month, with BT, Sky and TalkTalk being the most popular providers. Around 55% of people are receiving download speeds of less than 30mbps, and 20% receiving download speeds of less than 10mbps. Whilst over 88% of those responded receive upload speeds of less than 30mbps, with over 60% receiving upload speeds of less than 10mbps.

33% of those that took part in the survey said that they would pay more for a faster, more reliable service; a further 42% said maybe.

It is clear that broadband plays such an important role, with over 50% of respondents confirming that there are 3 or more users within the household, with 70% running more than 5 devices. Over 70% of people stated that they stream TV or films, and nearly 65% confirmed that there is an online gamer in the household.

The pandemic has increased demand for reliable broadband with more than 20% of those that completed the survey confirming that they have been working from home due to the coronavirus. An additional 52% confirmed that they work from home, at least sometimes, during normal times.

### Better Connected - Improving your Broadband

Most people would like to improve the speed and reliability of their broadband service. In fact, 75% of those that responded to the survey said they would consider paying more for the privilege; but what are the options?

Traditional broadband (**ADSL**) uses the old copper cables belonging to BT/Openreach infrastructure. Your internet speed can be dependent on the condition of the cables and the distance you are from the telephone exchange, as speed is lost over greater lengths of cabling. Download speeds for ADSL are usually up to 8mbps, although can increase to around 19mbps using ADSL2, although this is very much dependant on the distance from the exchange.

You can improve your download speeds by upgrading your broadband connection to **fibre**. Fibre uses tube like cabling, made of glass or plastic, to transmit light, and is much quicker than copper wire. **Fibre To The Cabinet**, or **FTTC** describes where data is transmitted super-fast to the cabinet (the local distribution box), then slowed down by traditional copper wire from the cabinet to your home. FTTC download speeds can reach up to 100mbps but will reduce drastically the further you are aware from the cabinet. Whilst at least 50% of

people who took part in the survey confirmed that they already have FTTC broadband, many of those are still receiving speeds of less than 30mbps.

**Fibre To The Premises**, or **FTTP**, offers fibre cabling right to your property, so the only limit on speed is the router itself. Speeds of up to 10gbps are possible, and only really limited by the provider and the price you wish to pay for the service. For example, guaranteed speeds of 80mbps are available for a monthly cost of £29.99.

FTTP may be a service that is offered by your Internet Service Provider (ISP), but unfortunately it is not currently available in our area.

Whilst BT will bring FTTP broadband to Street at some point in the future, other companies, such as [Jurassic Fibre](#) and [Truespeed](#), are busy laying brand new infrastructure, connecting communities with superfast broadband.

### **Truespeed**

Truespeed have already arrived in Wells and are progressing along the A39 from Bridgwater, and therefore are poised to be the first provider to offer FTTP broadband in Street.

Truespeed build new localised networks bringing the fibre cable directly to your property. This gives you ultrafast broadband, with no buffering or loss of speed during peak times. The download speed is also matched by the upload speed, and speeds are guaranteed, not “up to” or “average” speeds.

Truespeed offer 4 different plans to residential customers, ranging from 80mbps for a monthly charge of £29.99, up to 900mbps for a monthly charge of £69.99. Residential contracts are for 18 months, and alternative 24-month contracts are available for business customers.

Although the monthly charge does not include the cost of your BT line rental, included in the price is a VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) phoneline, and if you wish you can “port”, or transfer, your existing phone number. Thereafter you can cancel your contract with your existing provider.

Truespeed provide the equipment, and if eligible, installation is free through the Government’s [Gigabit Voucher Scheme](#) if you commit to switch once it is available in the area. Alternatively, installation is £120.

How quickly Truespeed will be available in Street will depend on the demand for the service. Once enough people have registered interest in Truespeed, the new network will be built within 12 to 18 months. Around 7% of households have already registered an interest in Truespeed, and a target of around 20% is required before it is economical for the installation to begin.

If you want further information on Truespeed or wish to register your interest, please visit [Truespeed.com](#)

## **Other alternatives**

Alternatives to FTTP are cable broadband and 5G broadband. Cable broadband uses a network of coaxial cable predominantly belonging to Virgin Media. Although cable offers a considerable improvement over traditional copper wire connections, it is not as fast as FTTP, and is not available in our area.

As 5G rolls out across the country a possible alternative to fixed broadband is 5G broadband, where the journey from the cabinet to the household is made by a 5G wireless connection, which could support speeds of between 80-100 mbps. The 5G infrastructure would come from small base stations that could be located on the top of street furniture or buildings, which could be much cheaper to install than fixed broadband but is predicted to be much more costly to maintain.

## **How to Improve Your Broadband in the Meantime**

If you are suffering from unreliable or slow broadband, and cannot wait for the new technology, there are few things you can try at home to try and improve your connection.

- If you can, use a wired connection. A wired connection will always be better than using Wi-Fi. So where possible plug your PC or TV streaming device straight into your router.
- Consider the position of your router. With different people in the household using multiple devices, it is normal for most, if not everyone, to be connecting to the home network using Wi-Fi. It is important to position your router where the signal will not be impeded from interference from electrical equipment, radiators, or fish tanks, and have a clear signal path, so not stuck in a cupboard.
- Change the channel. Like lanes on a motorway, performance can be compromised if there are a lot of people sharing the same channel. You may be able to manually change channel, or your router may switch to a channel with less traffic if you turn it off and on again. Similarly, if you have lots of devices connected to the internet, you may improve performance by switching some off that are not currently being used.
- Use the master socket. Plugging your router into the main socket, where your phone line enters the house, can maximise improve the efficiency of your connection. It is also advisable not to extend your phone cable between the socket and the router.
- Keep up to date. Updating your router to a new model can improve your connection speeds, and it may even be free from your broadband provider. Also ensure that your computer or device is running up-to-date software, including anti-virus software.
- Review broadband provider. As with your home and car insurance, and energy supplier, you should review your broadband contract when it comes to an end. You may find other deals that offer faster connectivity for a similar or even cheaper monthly cost, and often get an equipment upgrade at the same time.

Finally, Street Parish Council would like to thank all who took the time to complete the survey.