

St Leonards and St Ives Parish Council

Broadband and Mobile Coverage in the Parish: An Update

Just over six months ago, many of you joined us at the Village Hall for public meetings to discuss the poor broadband speeds and unreliable mobile phone signal experienced across the parish. These challenges remain high on the Parish Council's agenda, and we want to update you on the progress made since those meetings.

Broadband

Our parish continues to rank among the worst areas in Dorset—and indeed nationally—for broadband provision. In response, we sought the support of our local MP, Sir Christopher Chope, who helped bring our concerns to the attention of Sir Chris Bryant, Minister of State for Data Protection and Telecoms.

This advocacy prompted BDUK (Building Digital UK)—the government body responsible for expanding gigabit broadband and 4G mobile coverage in rural areas—to review our situation. As a result, they have commissioned Wessex

Internet, a Dorset-based provider, to install new infrastructure to deliver ultrafast broadband across much of the parish. All installation costs will be covered by BDUK.

Wessex Internet is currently conducting detailed surveys and anticipates completing the installation by the end of 2025.

However, not every property in the parish has been included in the initial rollout. If you'd like to check the status of your property or register your interest, please contact Wessex Internet via **www.wessexinternet.com** or call **0333 240 7997**.

In parallel, Trooli remains active in the area and plans to begin their network build around October 2025. If you are interested in connecting to their service, you can register your interest at **www.trooli.com**.

Despite repeated attempts, we have not been able to establish a constructive dialogue with Openreach. While we are aware

that some residents have been told ultrafast broadband may be available to them by the end of 2026, Openreach has not provided the Council with a formal update on their plans for the parish.

However, according to the Openreach fibre checker, Openreach is building widely across the parish. You can find out about your specific address by using the link below:

www.openreach.com/fibre-checker

Finally, the more people in the area that register an interest in fibre broadband, the more likely it is to happen. Registering your interest is not the same as signing up for the service and does not create any commitment on your part.

If you haven't done so already, it will help significantly if you would register an interest with all of the potential providers described above.

Mobile Signal

Improving mobile coverage remains a top priority, though progress has been slower than we would like.

Dorset Council on our behalf are currently in discussions regarding the installation of a new mobile mast on Forestry England land near the pedestrian crossing on Horton Road. We are now waiting for a formal decision from Forestry England on whether this will be approved.

We are also exploring a second

potential site within the parish, but progress there is similarly gradual. The two existing masts, both located on the periphery of the parish, are outdated and insufficient to meet current needs.

To address this, the Council has reached out to the UK's main network operators—EE, Vodafone, and O2—to request information about their upgrade and expansion plans for the area. EE and Vodafone have promised to respond with further details; unfortunately, we have yet to receive any reply from O2. We will continue to pursue these conversations on behalf of residents.

We appreciate your patience and support as we continue to press for improvements in both broadband and mobile connectivity throughout the parish. If you have questions or wish to share your experiences, please don't hesitate to contact us at **broadband@stleonardsparishcouncil.gov.uk**.

Need to contact the Parish Council:



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