

Better Broadband for Oxfordshire is a £25 million project to extend fibre enabled broadband to over 90% of homes and businesses in the county by the end of 2015, bringing significant social and economic benefits to rural areas where broadband access has previously been slow. By stepping in to fill the gaps not served commercially, businesses and homes across Oxfordshire will benefit. Here's what some Oxfordshire businesses and residents say about the benefits of superfast broadband.

## *Silicon Valley veteran champions broadband for Ewelme*



Local broadband champion Neil Blake campaigned heavily and proactively for years to have Ewelme in Oxfordshire connected to the superfast network. A retired engineer from the computer software industry, who worked for 10 years in the Silicon Valley bringing research to market, Neil lent his expertise and passion for technology to benefit his community.

Before Ewelme's broadband improvement was achieved in December 2013 the community wasn't even getting 1 Mbps, now it's over 40 times that. Having fought for his village to be connected and enabled so many of his desperate neighbours to sign up, in February 2014 Neil was able to surf the superfast broadband wave.

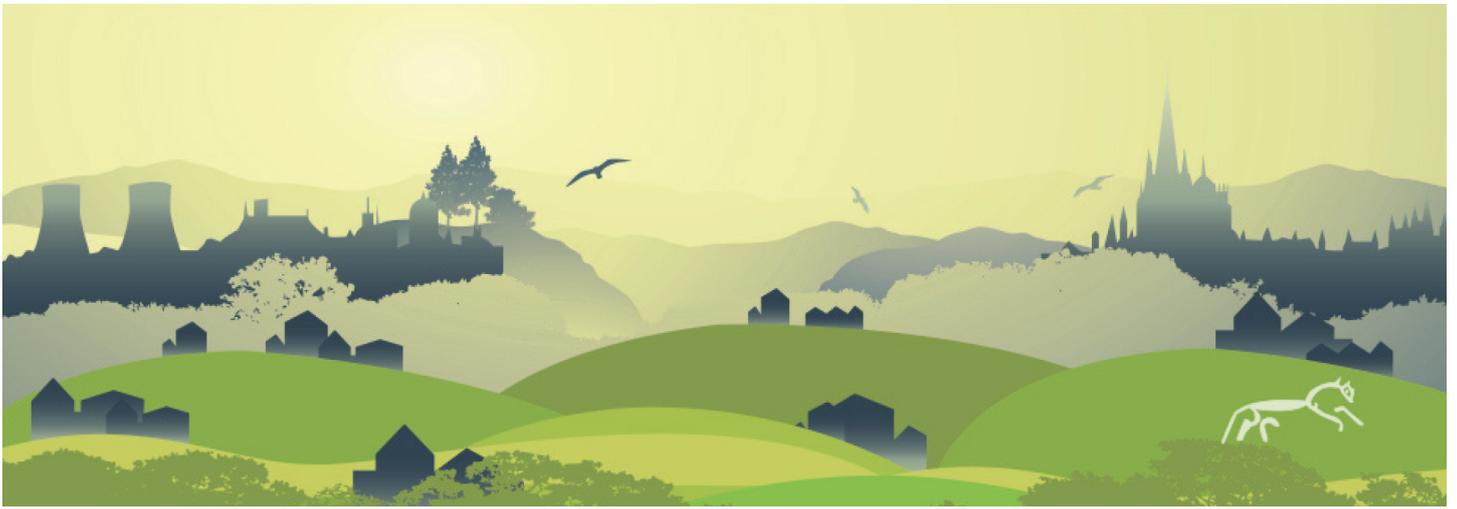
Neil says it was certainly worth the wait and now he can't really recall life without it:

*"It has been a revelation – the real fourth utility for a rural community – and has absolutely transformed day-to-day life back to my Silicon Valley days. Simple things like doing quick online research for information are instantly routine, downloading large updates for software is no longer an impossible nightmare, website building and maintenance is now easy, and exchanges of big publications no longer an issue.*

*"One very important benefit is that our service families at RAF Benson are now beginning to enjoy the communications services they richly deserve to stay in touch with relatives and friends posted abroad."*

As well as championing broadband, Neil now facilitates new business ventures and pro bono causes.

**Use the interactive postcode map at [www.betterbroadbandoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.betterbroadbandoxfordshire.org.uk) to find out where your parish falls within the current plan**



## Wi-Fi benefits *The Manor at Weston-on-the-Green*



Up until recently, the village of Weston-on-the-Green received a broadband speed of less than 1mbps. That was until the end of August when the village was enabled with superfast broadband via the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire programme.

Nick Vincent is the Front Manager of The Manor at Weston-on-the-Green, a hotel and restaurant in the village. Nick was very keen for better broadband to be activated in the village so that he could finally offer Wi-Fi to the guests, worthy of the name.

*"Previously it was pitiful, the guests couldn't use the internet here and had to rely on mobile signals, which can be equally as poor. People expect to be able to get the internet when they stay in hotels and it was something that we were very disappointed in not being able to offer.*

*"Since the upgrade, things have improved immeasurably. Guests have access to a good quality connection rather than have the connection timeout and lead to a great deal of frustration.*

*"But it's not just the guests who are benefitting, myself and the other members of the team are enjoying the benefits. Even when working on the desktop computer connected directly to the router, we were struggling to get things done. Now, we can use the computer, laptops and our mobile devices happily and easily.*

*"It really has been fantastic and has given the whole village a real lift. Village life can feel a little isolating at times so to have all the available communications working really means a lot to so many."*

***"It has been a revelation – the real fourth utility for a rural community"***

***"Since the upgrade, things have improved immeasurably"***

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