

DEVON & SOMERSET SUPER-FAST BROADBAND

Firstly, it seems that there are 2 schemes locally - Project Cosmic and the Devon & Somerset County Councils Superfast Broadband [bb] govt. and EU funded scheme.

Cosmic

This is a commercially provided satellite system which will provide free hardware and typically 6Mbps download/2Mbps upload via 2 European satellites launched earlier this year. Monthly subscription is around £25. The enabled area in the main by-passes Membury Parish: the one arm spreading from Kilminster up the Yarty round to Stockland and the other arm essentially following the Axminster/Chard road. However, the parish area roughly bounded by Furley to Longbridge, Yarcombe, James Lane, Challenger and back to Furley IS covered. More info from www.toowaydirect.com/regional-offers/devon-somerset-rural-connection/ This is a here-now solution for some and does not prevent involvement with the second scheme as and when that rolls out.

Devon & Somerset bb

This is 1 of 3 trial schemes nationally that have been approved by the govt. and has set the objectives of at least 2Mbps for everyone by 2015 and Superfast bb [defined as 24Mbps] by 2020. They are now about to start the information gathering stage and need to understand everything from confirmation of the BT connection boxes sites to number of businesses locally/people who work from home to consumer needs and current capability. This phase must be completed by next April and then that will be put in to a Tender document, by October next year, to be sent to interested commercial ISP's. The scheme is technology neutral so each supplier can come up with their own proposal be it cable/satellite or a mixture of both. That way it is hoped to get at least 2 suppliers so that we have a choice and competition. The suppliers may be national or local.

The scheme needs local champions to co-ordinate activity. At the moment the Parish & Town Councils, local Trades Councils [although Axminster Chamber of Trades did not send a rep to the initial meeting] and local press & parish mags are being contacted. By default I guess if we do nothing then Nick and I will end up being the contact points. However, although I have not discussed this with the Parish Council or Nick, I am sure we would prefer someone who uses and/or needs this service and therefore has practical hands-on inputs to be the prime champion - with us and the PC there as back-up and to help, if we can. Let one of us know if you can or will help.

Meanwhile, can I ask for you to spread the word. I would like to begin compiling a list of people who need/use bb as part of their business, providing that business is carried out within the parish. That way, we can ensure that you are kept up-to-date personally.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Alex Tasker

Membury Parish Council