

From: [Graham Long](#)
Sent: Saturday, January 04, 2014 11:45 AM
To: upotterywebsite@gmail.com
Subject: Broadband

Happy New Year!

Several local newspapers recently carried articles with headlines such as "Fast fibre broadband is coming to town". For those of you whose parishes are in Honiton, Hemyock, Corfe and Trull, this is the case and during 2014, BT will be making fast fibre broadband available in such towns and large villages. For the rest of us in more rural locations however the outlook is bleak because the maps on the Connecting Devon & Somerset website indicate that many parishes in Devon and Somerset are set to get no benefit from the £53M of public money being invested in "rural" broadband. What is worse, is that we are not allowed to know what is being planned, because BT required a Non Disclosure (gagging) Order to be signed by Devon & Somerset County Councils when the £53M contract was awarded to BT in January 2013.

A government report published in November shows that for ever £1 invested in faster broadband, local economies grow by £20. Add this to the fact that rural areas already receive approximately a half of the central government grant per head, that urban areas do, and it is clear that rural areas in our two counties are set for economic decline relative to nearby urban areas.

Attached is a leaflet about the public meeting on this issue that has been arranged for February 7 and will be chaired by Neil Parish MP. Please can you circulate information about this meeting as widely as possible. More details are available on the www.upottery.com parish website together with links to an on-line petition which all those affected are encouraged to sign.

Following criticism of such rural broadband projects by the National Audit Office and the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, East Devon and South Somerset District Councils (who refused to sign BT's gagging order) have set up a scrutiny panel to investigate the Connecting Devon & Somerset / BT contract and they will be meeting on January 16 at 10am in Honiton Business Centre. This is a public meeting and it is expected that CD&S will attend. If like my parish, few people in your parish will benefit from this £53M investment, then members your Parish Council may wish to attend this meeting also.

Feel free to contact me if you want more information on this issue.

Kind regards,
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Blackdown Hills AONB Management Group Member for Otter and West Parishes.

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