

# Chelmondiston Parish Council

www.chelmondiston.suffolk.gov.uk

Chairman: Cllr David Cordle, 'Trelowena', Hill Farm, Chelmondiston, Ipswich IP9 1JU

**Mrs Frances Sewell** – Clerk to *Chelmondiston Parish Council*  
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Mr James Cartlidge MP  
james.cartlidge.mp@parliament.uk

21<sup>st</sup> July 2015

Dear Mr Cartlidge

Re: **BROADBAND**

The Better Broadband for Suffolk programme, which aims to create a broadband network “fit for the 21st Century”, **hopes** to provide superfast connection speeds to 90 per cent of the county by the end of this year, with 95 per cent coverage by the end of 2018. This is not guaranteed!

Suffolk County Council promised that the remaining 5% would get Broadband in one form or another at an acceptable speed. It is becoming more and more obvious that a 2Mbps speed will all too soon become too slow and out dated. Not “fit for the 21st Century”.

**Chelmondiston**, we understand, is under consideration and will hopefully fall within the Phase 2 project but whether we receive a faster speed will no doubt depend on funding and outcomes of procurement processes.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter that was sent, prior to the elections, to the previous Leader of Suffolk County Council, Mark Bee, which lays out our concerns quite clearly. We did receive a general reply.

We now understand that the Government is encouraging local highway authorities to work collaboratively with infrastructure providers to help expedite broadband roll out. We would be interested to know how this is being done. As we perceive it, more infrastructure will be needed locally, i.e. within our area, thus **more funding has to be made available**.

Broadband is not a luxury any more but a necessity for all businesses, service providers, students; in fact for everyone, and especially for those living in the country who are unable to access facilities in urban areas.

You will no doubt be aware that the *CLA, Director of Policy, Christopher Price* questioned why a specific Universal Service Obligation was not incorporated within the Government's Productivity Plan; an obligation of at least 10 Mbps on network providers for **ALL** rural homes and businesses. As he says a “missed opportunity”.

We also note the *Central Suffolk and North Ipswich MP, Dr Dan Poulter* recently expressed his concern of creating a “digital divide” and has apparently won the support of Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy, to investigate the role of BT in the scheme.

This poor broadband connection is symptomatic of the way that the Peninsula suffers from a lack of investment in its technical infrastructure, because our mobile signal is also very unsatisfactory, and despite repeated requests during the last two to three years, improvement remains stubbornly predicted to be just over the horizon.

The population density of the Peninsula is relatively low, making investment in infrastructure unattractive to service providers. However, this short-term approach misses the business-growth potential that the area has. The Peninsula, the whole area being designated of special scenic merit, provides an inspiring working environment for creative/research businesses, for people working either individually at home or collaboratively in small research units. None of this potential growth is remotely possible however, without a greatly improved electronic infrastructure. It requires an enlightened approach by central/local Government to take the initiative and provide support for the required improvements to be put in place.

**Chelmondiston Parish Council** would like you to **urgently press** the Government, BT, Suffolk County Council, Babergh District Council and any associated partners in this rollout scheme for additional funding and to commit to making **superfast** fibre broadband available to **every household and business** across the peninsula, including the remaining 5%. We deserve the best.

Kind regards

*Fran Sewell*

Chelmondiston Parish Clerk

*Please address all correspondence to the Parish Clerk*

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