



B4SH November 2020 update - *Second lockdown, but not for us*

AGM and the network rollout

B4SH held our second AGM on 13th November on Zoom. Strange how different it is to holding a meeting in person. Accounts and directors' report were signed off and the directors are now all re-elected and ready to continue the network rollout.

Our team of volunteer directors are supported by a team of community volunteers who are helping bring the network to all parts of the Surrey Hills. It would be fair to say that at the moment demand for service outstrips the speed that we can extend the network, so we are always grateful for any help that you can offer – ad hoc, experienced or completely new to telecoms, all are very welcome as we can show you the ropes and you can learn new skills; win, win.

Gigabit Voucher Scheme

Surrey residents with a service sub 100Mb (not difficult) will have received a postcard from SCC regarding the Gigabit voucher scheme. Postcard recipients have been in touch from all over Surrey, from Milford to Hindhead to Pirbright to Lingfield, but unfortunately for them we are concentrating our efforts on the Surrey Hills.

Under the scheme, we have a list of postcodes where the Government will pay £1500 for a residential connection and £3500 for a business connection and, with the voucher, we can also waive the £150 fee to connect your router.

B4SH registered for GBVS at the end of April and 4 months later, almost to the day, we were approved. However, the long process has been worth it, as we have now started to draw down our first vouchers. Thank you to the residents who have been part of this new process as we stepped through the various stages.

The vouchers are a huge help in B4SH's finances but won't be a replacement for continued capital investment. We are installing the latest technology, so are reliant on raising funds so that we can roll out our brand new and completely independent network. We continue to be "pulled" to an area by interest and investment from groups of residents and don't roll out our network in the hope that people will subscribe once we reach them.

Where are we now?

We have been planning and installing in several areas from White Lane/Halfpenny Lane, Guildford to Albury to Northcote Lane and Stroud Lane, Shamley Green, plus others. But we are still a small team and the Gigabit Voucher Scheme only raises funds for us after we have installed a property, and more importantly doesn't cover the whole cost. So we continue to ask for your support.

Apart from needing more volunteers to help us plan our network as well as build it, we are also laying a continuous network so can't "parachute" our service into a village. Think of it rather like a water pipe, it needs to be connected throughout its length.

Guildford Borough Council have been very supportive and we have a good working partnership as we agree the route to cross their SANG in White/Halfpenny Lanes and have just been granted a free wayleave across all GBC land,

for which we are very grateful. Many thanks also to the Albury Estate for their ongoing support to enable us to reach the White Lane area.

Our work schedule looks full till the early part of next year but we are still talking to new areas for build in 2021.



Hard digging, but worth it

Routes

Here is a brief overview of areas (not exhaustive) where we have had contact from residents. All are at a different stage:

Albury north of The Street – interest there and growing

Albury south of The Street– interest there and growing

Albury/Chilworth borders (Dorking Rd, Mill Reach area)

Albury/Chilworth borders (Roseacre Gardens, Pine View Close, Dorking Rd)

Albury Heath – service to cricket pavilion and nearby properties. Waiting to establish if sufficient interest from properties within Park Road, Heath Lane and Brook Lane.

Chilworth, Lockner Holt

East Horsley – interest from some residents in Fullers Farm Road/Shere Road (Shere end). Local champion needed to gather wayleaves and interested parties.

Farley Green

Farley Heath

Guildford, White Lane/Halfpenny Lane/Longdown Road – Installation of duct to the area has started. We have GBC's support on wayleaves and to cross their SANG below White Lane.

Shamley Green, Madgehole Lane – installed to end of lane. Remainder of installation along with blowing and connecting properties still to be completed

Shamley Green, Northcote Lane/Green Lane/Guildford Road – work ongoing. Service will continue over to Wonersh & Shamley Green School.

Shamley Green, Stroud Lane – east side of lane is completed and customers are live. West side installation has reached opposite Winters Grace. Route to southernmost properties to be walked and finalised.

Shamley Green, Stroud Common

Shere, Hound House Road

Shere, village – small amount of interest from various parts of the village. Service would reach the village from the west.

Peaslake – Pipeline still to reach the area. Some interest expressed in Pond Lane and Walking Bottom. At the moment it is not clear from which direction we will approach the village

Winterfold

Wonersh, Derryswood – investment target reached and wayleaves verbally agreed to reach Derryswood Farm, Derryswood House, flats and St Mary's. Work to be scheduled.

Do you want to bring service to your area?

If anyone would like to know how to generate interest in their area, what message to give, what's entailed in installing service, how do you raise funds, what does being a Champion mean, we would like to arrange an event (most likely on Zoom) where we can outline how we have seen it works best. Let us know if this is something you would find helpful.

Mapping

We are now using a new mapping system and GBC have been hugely helpful in this. Our surveyor has recorded the routes digitally which are being uploaded into the new mapping system which will make network planning easier, route adjustments simple and wayleaves more straightforward.

CRM

We are very lucky to have one of our volunteers developing a new customer relationship management system. It has been a hugely positive source of information helping all of us working remotely to be able to share information and keep track of progress, voucher status etc on our various routes in the Surrey Hills.

Big kit

Residents in Shamley Green may have seen new pieces of kit in action. We have been installing duct with a vibrating mole plough, complete with reels of duct on the front and a large blade at the back, which has helped us increase the speed of installation. We also enhanced our blowing capability with a new blowing machine. Anyone who would like to be involved (and likes kit!), please let us know.



New cabinet



We have a new cabinet at Willinghurst to serve local residents. Another cabinet is to go into Wonersh and Shamley Green school for services at the other end of the village.

Specific help needed

We are hugely fortunate in having a great team of volunteers doing everything from administration and organisation of our road crossings, to being the liaison between contractors and homeowners, to splicing and giving IT advice, to logistics. We couldn't do it without their support. However, we need some particular help in the following areas, so would love to hear from you:

- DIY skills of someone to do house installations. We have a box of tools and there are no specialist skills needed as we have a splicer (though you could learn how to splice if you would like to gain a new skill).
- Administrative help from a "people person" to help us run mini projects where we are rolling out service in different areas. Any project managers out there who would like to be involved in a community project? (Anyone who has organised an event is effectively a project manager!)
- Network planning help is always needed. If you've been made redundant or have retired and are intrigued how a community benefit society rolls out a brand new network, get in touch.
- Purchasing is becoming a bigger job in the office. If anyone would like to be responsible for the purchasing of what can be quite technical products, please get in touch.

- Wayleaves. If you like maps (we are now using a new mapping system), want to get to know the area better and could help with the generation of maps on our new mapping system and the corresponding wayleave paperwork, please make contact.



Enquiries

I must apologise to all those who have been chasing responses sent to our email address enquiries@b4sh.org.uk. We always try to respond, but the postcard to all residents has greatly increased email traffic, plus since lockdown interest levels have raised to even greater heights. We are still a very small team and there are often not quite enough hours in the day to get back to everyone for which we apologise. I hope this update gives you a flavour of our progress over the last 3 months.

Lastly we'd like to thank all our volunteers who make this all happen. All our directors offer their time and effort free of charge and without them, B4SH would not be where it is today. I salute you all.

Sonya Graham