

Lyng Broadband Action Group

Why has a Broadband Action Group Formed in Lyng?

Lyng village - population 800, comprising 350 houses nestling in the scenic valley of the River Wensum, 12 miles from Norwich. Idyllic, but over 7 kms from the Reepham telephone exchange, therefore beset by long-line problems.

For most, broadband is no more than a dream, stuck in the bygone age of dial-up. The few lucky ones with landline broadband are getting half a Meg or less. A few on the outskirts are trying to cope using dongles to access GPRS mobile signals (max 40kps) A few have invested in satellite, but this is expensive and not problem-free.

Just to pile on the agony, you are lucky to get a signal on your mobile anywhere in the village.

What is the Impact on Villagers' Lives?

A few examples:

- A plumber can't access essential catalogues online
- Schoolchildren being taken 8 miles to Dereham library to do on-line homework research
- A wildlife photographer sending urgent photos on discs to publishers...cost £5 each time
- A music teacher cannot download music
- A farmer cannot complete VAT returns on-line or access DEFRA files
- Education, self-employment, entrepreneurship and effective communication are being stifled.

There has been a market failure in Lyng, both regarding broadband and mobile signals. Engineers have done their best to try to provide individuals with broadband, but, perhaps understandably these days, BT is constrained by what it considers commercially viable. Trials on overcoming long-line problems have not so far been of assistance to the village.

So What Is the Village Broadband Action Group Doing?

We have been up and running since late July, but are making good progress.

We have:

- Issued over 400 survey questionnaires to establish the level of demand for broadband
- Got the support of our MP George Freeman, our County Councillor Bill Borrett and Parish Councillors
- Presented Lyng's case at a public meeting on rural broadband held by Norfolk County Council
- Given an interview to Radio Norwich
- With the help of George Freeman MP, entered talks with Sharedband concerning a Sharedband pilot in the village

- Held detailed discussions with the County Council about our intended bid for EEDA funding.

What is the Focus of the Action Group?

Obtaining the infrastructure, funding and investment for a viable 2nd generation broadband system.

We are not expending energy protesting or writing letters of complaint. Instead we are registering our demand on EREBUS.

We are keen, enthusiastic, positive and willing to work to make this project work.

We don't expect this to be either a smooth process or quickly resolved.

We are looking at successful schemes that other rural communities have adopted.

In turn we are fully prepared to share information and experiences with other villages and provide feedback to our stakeholders.

How Do We See the Action Group Developing?

We need to foster the support that we have already received in the village and beyond.

We are considering:

- Setting up a support group for fund-raising
- Making an e-mail group and a face book group to give information and answer queries
- Monthly contributions to the parish newsletter and attending parish council meetings.

We are keen to hear from other broadband action groups and to learn from their experiences.

If you would like to contact the Lyng Broadband Action Group then please email info@broadbandnorfolk.com